Electronic Solutions to the Problems of Monograph Publishing

By

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Abstract

Electronic Solutions to the Problems of Monograph Publishing examines the suggestion that the so-called monograph crisis can be overcome by making use of the possibilities of electronic publishing. Research monographs are the preferred way in which scholarship is communicated in most disciplines in the humanities and some in the social sciences. The problems faced by publishers influence the practices of the scholars themselves. This study examines the nature of the crisis in the print environment, the aspirations of scholarly publishers in the electronic environment and the attitudes of and impacts on other parts of the information chain. There is as yet little experience of electronic monographs, so the emphasis is on the projections of the various players and on the major experiments that are being funded. There is nevertheless consideration of the practical aspects of making content available in digital form. No immediate solution is presented but there are pointers to fruitful future developments.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The aims and scope of this study is presented in the Executive Summary, which follows. This study will be on of the last sponsored by the British National Bibliography Research Fund (BNBRF). The remit of the Fund is described in part in section 1 of the study and, for the moment, is available from the web-site (). Unfortunately the small government payment which enabled the Fund to make its grants has been discontinued by Resource, now the relevant research body, for reasons which have never properly articulated and which run counter to the expressed wishes of all those representative bodies, whose members sat on the committee of the BNBRF as well as some others.

I wish therefore to begin by thanking the BNBRF, its last chairman Mr. David Whitaker, and Mr. Martin Nail, who was responsible for its back-up.

The Council of Academic and Professional Publishers (CAPP) of the Publishers Association (PA) sponsored the project. The chairman of the council, who approved this sponsorship, was Mr. Dominic Knight of Palgrave Ltd. (formerly Macmillan Press). I owe him and Mr. Andrew Schuller, who reviewed the final draft on behalf of both CAPP and the BNBRF, a special debt of gratitude. I fear the result was not what they expected. I also want to thank Mr. John Davies and, more recently, Mr. Graham Taylor of the PA.

I got a lot of help from a lot of publishers and a fair number of librarians and scholars. As I explain in 2.2 of the text, I found that to agree to confidentiality was the only way that I could set out the views of many whom I spoke to or wrote to. I therefore decided to cite no participants in the study by name. I hope they cannot be detected.

I have also mentioned in the text that the study, though delayed, was certainly premature. It has proved very difficult to finish because the picture is becoming clearer almost on a daily basis. I have taken the opportunity to add some last minute references but one has to stop somewhere.

In the text references to the notes in appendix 3 are by numbers bracketed and in bold. Other bracketed numbers refer to sections of the text.

I am always interested in feedback. My enthusiasm for the possibilities of electronic monographs has not finished with the putting to bed of this study. I can be reached at Anthony.watkinson@btinternet.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examines the problems publishers have in maintaining a programme of those specialist monographs which are the main way that primary research is transmitted in certain disciplines and ascertains whether there are electronic solutions to these problems.
The perspective of traditional publishers is concentrated on but in the context of the needs and/or expectations of the information chain as a whole, both academic authors and readers and intermediaries such as libraries.

It is established that there is a crisis in supply essentially because there is a crisis in demand. Fewer monographs are now published and it is likely that the numbers will continue to decline. Responses from publishers show why this is the case. The stark conclusion is that producing books in electronic form is unlikely to halt the decline. The economics of this type of electronic publishing are outlined. There are however voices contradicting this view and these voices are listened to.

Central to the study is an investigation of the plans and expectations of both university presses and commercial publishers. It is clear that most publishers are considering electronic monographs very seriously as part of a general move into attempting to realise the potential of the medium. However it is also clear that there are few thought-through policies in existence as yet and very little experience to go on. There is a discussion of partnerships and also of what a publisher needs to do either to work with partners or go it alone. Few scholarly publishers are ready to go it alone in the sense of being the direct source of supply for their electronic publications. The potential of print on demand, strictly speaking part of the print environment, is also examined.

A significant part of the study is devoted to those demonstrator projects which are mostly initiatives inspired by thinking outside publishing. Do they represent a new way of transmitting scholarship, already being discussed in the print environment, but perhaps realisable in electronic form? Do they provide a practical approach to self-sustaining publishing programmes when the funding has run out?
There is no definitive conclusion.

The message from the academic community is not a clear one. This is hardly surprising in that scholars need to be able to react to actuals rather than projects. There is certainly a recognition of the various barriers to progress. It is however clear that libraries are willing to accept electronic publishing and in some cases even welcome it though as yet the channels available for bringing the content to the reader are not seen as wholly adequate.

A: Introduction and Context

In these first two sections, I am setting out the relationship of the study to the original proposal (1.1 to 1.4); my own understanding of what publishers do, which differs from the implicit assumptions in most studies of this type (1.5 and 1.6); a description of the methodology adopted (2.1 to 2.3); and a second contextual excursus on the information chain (2.4). Much of these sections contain the sort of content, which in the monograph literature of days past, would have been given a smaller font size

1. THE PURPOSE OF AND SUPPORT FOR THIS STUDY

In a project lasting for over a year there is likely to be some shift in the way the researcher conceives of its aims and scope. I have laid out the section of the original submission to the committee of the BNBRF that defined the purpose of the study in italics. I have commented by interpositions in the standard typeface I am using on how I see the project now that I am writing it up and have also pointed to the relevant sections of the study where particular aspects of the original prospectus are dealt with. In the last two sub-sections I have also given my own take on the role of the publisher and the role of profit (surplus) in publishing. I shall explain why.

I should also add that what I mean by the word monograph is covered in some detail in section 3.1.

1.1 A Cinderella area of research

The first draft of the submission began as follows and is being used here because it sets out my stall at greater length than the final more succinct version while conveying the same message:

> "*Scholars in the sciences communicate their research mainly through articles in primary journals but for scholars in the social sciences and the humanities research is as frequently and in some disciplines more usually communicated by means of monograph publishing. Whereas the potential created by the development of the web [World Wide Web] has been well exposed and partially realised in the case of serials publishing and in the publishing of reference materials, there has been very little work on using the Internet to make available monographic material.*"

Now that I have done an extensive literature search I have found no reason to qualify this statement.

There has indeed been little change since 1998 when Armstrong and Lonsdale produced their important study on electronic monographs and textbooks **(1)**. They suggested some reasons for this neglect, compared with the numerous studies of the electronic publication of journals, in their section 1.1, which are worth recording because they also

have relevance to sections of this current study, those covering publisher policies and the economics of publishing e-books in particular:

Journals are more manageable and, by virtue of their serials nature, tend to attract a stable user population. This may be because articles tend to be of a more manageable size and journal issues can easily be divided into parts and so are more easily delivered. The periodical nature of journals means that larger investments can be made, in the expectation of longer-term return. There clearly also the incentives of currency and convenient access.

Indeed as far as I know there is no ongoing project in this area that can be claimed as a serious investigation of monograph publishing in the UK. A partial exception is a project recently started in the UK by the JISC E-Books Working Group, which does cover the whole range of e-books, but which is a seriously concerned with the role of monographs and incorporates a survey of what is going on **(2)**.

There is also the four year project of the AAUP (which I have described briefly in 4.1) and there are no doubt other plans for work on this topic in the USA which I have not heard of.

To return to the Cinderella designation, it is also significant that the standard book on research communication **(3)** is overwhelmingly concerned with serials and the publication of articles (papers) as the way in which research is characteristically communicated

The earlier draft continues:

This is particularly surprising in that for many years, whereas serials publishing still thrives albeit challenged, monograph publishing has been in crisis. As early as the 1970s the Royal Historical Society made use of information technology to create a programme of cheaper monographs in that area [i.e. history]. The desktop revolution is now routinely exploited to enable significant cost savings in production. However making use of the Internet for delivery of monograph content and also making use of its potential for the enhancement of that content are Cinderella areas".

The comparison with what has happened in the serials publishing has come to be perceived by me (as it was for Armstrong and Lonsdale) as intrinsically important to this project as I explain below.

The history of the crisis will be explored below in section 4.1.

1.2 Aims and scope revisited

I now turn to the final submitted proposal to provide the aims and scope:

"The purpose of this study is to examine:

a) *The ways in which publishers and others have begun to and are planning to provide electronic vehicles for monograph content.*
b) *Those projects in particular which appear to be capable of implementation in the near future with a view to establishing a number of possible scenarios.*
c) *The standards, formats and other conditions which are most likely to lead to implementation*
d) *In general the likely acceptability of those approaches deemed to be viable both for the library and for the end-user (reader) as well as for the author and the publisher. Pricing models will be considered.*

I shall concentrate on a) in section 6. This is in line with the remit given to me. I shall however vary the aim set out in b) above to look into at some length those projects that are not to my mind likely to be capable of implementation (on a self-sustaining basis) at least in the foreseeable future. This is because they are well publicised, embody a lot of serious thinking and are seen as representing solutions by some commentators including some but not many publishers. There are also reasons for thinking about these projects that are intrinsic to the purposes of this study as I shall explain in the last section 8.

I also have to make clear at this stage that my hope of describing fully worked-through scenarios was not realised. I shall explain the reasons in more detail but they can here be described here succinctly as   no scenario was possible because the practical details had not been worked out fully. I had hoped by creating such scenarios to give something meaty for librarians and end-users to chew on. I was nevertheless pleased with the responses by librarians to the short and unfleshed-out questionnaire that I did approach.

As other researchers in the area of scholarly communication have found it is very difficult indeed to describe an electronic product or service in such a way that it can be visualised properly. The experience of the SuperJournal project is very relevant here **(4)**. Actual use of an electronic journal excites different responses from reacting to it hypothetically. For the same class of reason I have not dwelt at length on pricing models. Only now are scholarly publishers beginning to work them out. Nevertheless pricing does have to come into the picture   see section 7.2 for example

In spite of a lack of actual experience of electronic monographs, both academics and librarians do have a familiarity of working on the Web, which was not the situation back in the mid 1990s when journals were beginning to become available online. I have had a number of productive talks with senior academics and those associated with their learned societies to establish at least a take on the current attitudes, hopes and fears from within the Academy   see section 7.1. Evidence for library thinking in this area comes mainly through monitoring some key list serves/ discussions forums and attendance at conferences particularly in North America. This supplements the results of the short questionnaire (appendix 2), discussed in section 7.2.

1.3 Benefits?

The substantive part of the original proposal ended with the following optimistic sentiments:

It is clear that any study of this sort must be of great interest to the community of scholarly authors or readers whether they see a role for the publishers or aim to communicate without publishing support. Those publishers whose programmes are built on monograph literature and who seek to maintain or achieve profitability and also to improve their offerings are currently not sure how to move forward and will benefit from the opportunities being set out. Clearly also the other players in the information will be significantly affected by any shift from print to electronic including most obviously librarians and booksellers.

I do not think I have been of much help to booksellers. This study was premature Only now (2001) are scholarly publishers beginning to explore ways in which the selling of electronic monographs can exploit existing traditional channels. I hope however that I have provided some evidence of the trends in this area, which will be of help to publishers and librarians and raise questions, which need to be answered, if the solutions being attempted are to work. It is clear to me (see section 7.2) that librarians are waiting for publishers to act, but in a much more clear-headed way than was the case when they pressed for journals online. There are plenty of false starts in electronic publishing and at least one company has gone to the wall because of a miscalculation over the way things are moving. I shall return to the question of the benefits of the study in the final section.

1.4 Responding to the sponsoring body

The Council of Academic and Professional Publishers of the Publishers Association (CAPP) were the sponsors of the study and I have had the benefit of discussions with a number of senior and experienced publishers who are or have been members of that council. Part of the remit given to me by CAPP and endorsed by BNBRF was to emphasise the practical. The statement of Kate Wittenberg of Columbia University Press about the problems in one particular discipline should be given centre stage:

The biggest question is whether the web can make the publication of history monographs more economically viable **(5)**.

This bald statement, which can be extrapolated to other areas of the humanities, is particularly important because Ms Wittenberg, a highly experienced publisher, is also through her affiliation closely associated with one of the more speculative schemes, discussed in section 5. Dissemination of scholarship has to be paid for. I shall labour this point as a contextual one in section 1.6 below.

I have already touched by implication on the fact BNBRF funding is contingent on the work funded demonstrably being of interest to a number of the sectors represented on the BNBRF committee. It would be inappropriate to concentrate solely on the interests of publishers for that reason alone. My argument would also be that publishers are intermediaries between author and reader (see section 2.4 below) and their activities

only have value which is contingent on their mission to communicate (in this context) scholarship. Essentially it seems to me that publishers as intermediaries can only justify their existence if they successfully serve the needs of their authors   see next section.

1.5   Publishers work for authors

Because of their role publishers do have a different perspective of scholarly communication from that of librarians. Almost all studies in information science are written from the library viewpoint. I am consciously taking a publishing perspective. With this in mind I want to make some points here that are both implicit in and lie behind this whole study but which are not self-evident to all.

My contention is that publishers work with and understand the motivations of academics as authors and librarians likewise have the same relationship with academics as users of the literature. This is not to say that publishers and librarians cannot feel empathy with academics in the respective other role. It is just that they do not have the same relationship. And yet both librarian and publisher are working with the same person in the arena of scholarly monographs where the same academic is both author and reader of the same corpus of information. It is outside the scope of this study to examine whether or not scholarly publishing controlled by a library hierarchy can work well **(6)**.

The second (related) point is the contention that the same academic does not react in the same way in a different role. This schizophrenia is much more marked in the STM journals context. Librarians have been puzzled by this way of thinking when discussing the serials crisis and implementing programmes aimed at moving towards its solution   as they see it. The (US) Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in its SPARC programme **(7)** tries to explain to the academic community what they see as obvious yet is not obvious to what they call The Academy. To the ARL libraries and users suffer because of the profit grabbing activities of certain commercial publishers but the academic community as authors, and editors support these same publishers. The fact that the increasing cost of serials has squeezed the monograph budget is important to us (see section 4 in general) but this is not the place to examine the contention.

My third point is related. Publishers make money (or try to) and librarians spend money. The following comment is relevant:

> I want to challenge the general statement running though your
> discussion that publishers act according to the same economic motives as
> libraries. Publishers try to maximize profit. The greater their net
> returns, the more money the owners (corporate or individual) have for
> their private purposes. Libraries must stay within their allocated
> budgets, but do not benefit institutionally or personally from any savings
> beyond that point. Indeed, if we do not spend all our money we are almost
> certain to receive a proportionately lower allocation the following year,
> so we normally try to spend it all. Optimum economic behavior for us is to
> spend all our money, but to spend it so as to maximize the satisfaction of
> the users. However, our success at meeting user needs has only a very

limited effect on our personal careers. Our actions affect the quality of
the institution, but they are rarely critical to its survival **(8)**

Nevertheless, as I shall examine further, publishers do serve their authors, see
themselves as serving their authors and are seen by the scholarly community as serving
their authors.

1.6   Publishers and profits

Well on in the writing up of this study, it became clear to me that the question of profits
being made from publishing, and what this means, needed to be examined for the
benefit of readers who are not publishers. There are also some central issues involved.
The context is the debate about the commoditising of information, as it is sometimes
referred, which comes up repeatedly in the context of learned journals and their prices
and lurks in the background in discussions of the future of monographs. I have referred
to other aspects of this debate elsewhere. Throughout this study I have referred to
monographs as profitable or unprofitable and have quoted publishers on this point.
What does this mean?

I return to the definition of profit in section 4. For the moment I want to put on record
that it is obvious that covering costs in the sense of making enough money to pay for
outgoings such as print, promotion, salaries and other direct overheads and accrued
royalties (if any) is usually not enough. Someone has to cover the indirect overheads,
the infrastructure. Making a profit is to have money available to invest in new
publishing.

Monograph publishers are not just divided between for-profit (commercial) and non-
profit (or in the US not-for-profit) publishers. Not all the latter group looks at profits in
quite the same way. Some of the leading university presses operate like commercial
companies. They may make a surplus rather than a profit but the difference is that the
part of the surplus, which is not set on one side for investment, goes to the university
and not to the shareholders. Most of the smaller university presses do not make money.
Especially in the USA there are recurrent crises within this sector, which are mostly not
discussed openly **(9)**. The University of New England Press comprehends a number of
presses that used to be independent but now have only an editorial role. The University
of Iowa Press has recently taken a different step and become part of a commercial
publisher while retaining editorial independence. Some presses in the UK (such as
University College London and Imperial College London presses) are part-owned by
commercial companies.

I have used the word profit to subsume surplus throughout.

The way that they are financed varies a lot. I suspect that almost all the smaller houses
do not have to account for a number of different areas which for a commercial company
would be part of overhead and involved in any pricing and profit calculation, for example
the building, its maintenance and the information technology infrastructure. Some
presses are run as part of the library network. It is my understanding however that few

presses are actually subsidised in the sense of an annual grant given by a university and they are expected to keep in the black on a current-account trading basis. All companies have to think in terms of breaking even and profit/surplus even if the nature of the calculations varies. In the end a financial calculation of some sort has to be made and decisions based on that calculation whether it is to take on a certain number of loss making books or none at all.

Back in 1999 the noted US publisher Andre Schiffrin wrote, apropos of the decision of Oxford University Press to axe its poetry list:

> It seems clear that Oxford s decision to cut back on poetry was more than simply a question of deciding what areas to concentrate on. It was a classic executive decision to increase annual profit at the expense of product lines that were, perhaps wrongly, seen as having a limited constituency

What is happening to OUP   now paying a lot more money to the university than it once did   is happening in the US more and more. Schiffrin continues:

> Indeed, as Peter Givler, executive director of the Association of American University Presses, elegantly phrased it to me, many universities can be said to be offering negative support. In other words, they have decided that there presses should be treated as profit centers, and have asked them to pay back to the university a percentage of their sales.

He concludes:

> The question is whether universities will choose to use their resources to help presses develop books that can serve their constituencies in intellectual exciting ways   or whether universities will continue to reduce financial support to presses, and, even, in some cases, demand payments from them **(10)**.

What is the implication?

Is monograph publishing different? Is the publishing of research monographs so different from other types of scholarly communication that it has to be subsidised come what may? There are a lot of questions relating to the role of the press in relation to the scholarly community. For certain types of university presses and for commercial publishers the decision is one that has in the end to be made in terms of the overall financial performance of the press. For other types of university press   the majority - the decision will depend on other factors. These will include such considerations as whether or not there is a view within the university that dissemination of scholarship is as much part of its role as the funding of research and, in the end, where the money can be found internally or sought externally.

These are macroscopic decisions. At the level of the individual decision to publish or not to publish an individual monograph, there will be a lot of variation in the way that break-even (a tricky concept), cost recovery (likewise) and overheads are defined. Indeed the

decision to embark on an electronic publishing programme can depend on how the costs of so doing are allocated.

2. THE WAY THIS PROJECT WAS RESEARCHED

In this section I shall set out the methodology I used in the preparation of this study. Some of the approaches set out below were part of a plan envisaged from the start and others came to be recognised as better routes to understanding as the study progressed. Understanding evidence is more important than putting it into tabular form. I shall also draw attention to some considerations and make clear some assumptions that became important in my view (sometimes gradually) as central to the context of the research. For information on the sources see Appendix 3.

2.1   The methodology: interviewing and questionnaires

I did not find a great deal of guidance from the literature, as I have already mentioned in section 1.1 and shall explain further in appendix 3. I got a lot more out of talking to managers within publishing houses, usually senior editorial executives or managing directors but not only. It is very important to go to people who understand the technical underpinnings in the context of overall business plans. I was fortunate that some key people were willing to give me their insights. I shall go over how I elicited information both from this source and from the associated publishing questionnaire. Obviously in a study of this type I worked a lot with web-sites and for information about new models (see section 5) reading the extensive material available on the Internet followed up by interviews was my main source of information. For the very selective feedback from the author/user community I did decide to seek and get, I relied largely upon interviews but I did ask questions of both publishers and librarians about their perceptions of the attitudes of the Academy.

I began with a number of preliminary interviews on both sides of the Atlantic of publishing houses I perceived to be relevant to the purpose of this study. I made use of Book Expo America in June 2000 to meet a selection of US monograph publishers. I need to explain here, that, although this is a study funded in the UK and concerned with the UK situation, it would be both distorting the overall picture and omitting key evidence to ignore what is going on in North America. Obviously academics as users, booksellers and librarians read or handle or make available books of this type published outside the UK and very largely in the USA.

I realise that I should qualify the use of the word interview . I did talk face-to-face with about 40 people (representing various categories of interest) in the research for this study but I often clarified my understanding by subsequent e-mail follow up and I also interacted with a number of other people entirely by e-mail and telephone.

There are many more companies publishing research monographs in the States. This is particularly true of the university presses. There is no list of university presses in the UK but there are certainly less than ten that need to be considered in this context. The Association of American University Presses has about 120 members and almost all of

them are publishers of the sort of monographs I am concerned with. Some of these university presses are significant companies though none of them are as big as the two largest university presses in the UK. It is not breaking any pledges to confidentiality to give an impression of the size of the output of the biggest publisher in this sector of publishing. Oxford University Press from the humanities and social sciences division of its Oxford headquarters publish something like 600 monographs (my definition) a year. This is a lot of scholarly books. There are a few large and a number of smaller commercial companies. In both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors I concentrated on the larger organisations   but not to the total exclusion of smaller publishers.

I did not draw up my questionnaire until October and sent it out to those companies that had already expressed an interest in filling it in. The feedback received this route has been conflated (as below) feedback received from other sources but I have usually explained where views quoted come from.

Some publishers were talked to more than once (different people sometimes) and some both filled in the questionnaire and talked. 47 received the document after having agreed to receive it and 6 filled it in entirely. Others gave me partial returns and others replied to a few questions but separately. 23 publishers provided some sort of feedback about their own policies and practices. There were also some other comments coming in on technical points and from others not directly involved in publishing. The publishers who gave meaningful interviews and/or filled in the questionnaire including almost all the major publishers of monographs in the UK including both university presses and commercial publishers. In the USA most of the major university presses were covered and also some commercial presses including one very large one. It is particularly pleasing in the context of this study to have had confidential insights from certain well-established commercial companies. It is important to recognize that the contribution of these companies to the corpus of peer-reviewed specialist monographs is, in spite of all the financial problems to be examined later, still of serious important in terms of numbers of titles produced per year.

No vanity presses were interviewed or were sent questionnaires. I have however looked at the sites of two large but little known presses given to me as examples of the genre by US scholars. These companies concentrate on specialist monographs and they show no sign of any move towards e-monographs. I also note that they currently appear (at least in one case) to go for an initial print run of as low as 200 copies. They do represent however a way of getting published and are those relevant in certain circumstances.

How representative was the sample? As well as the big players it has been estimated that there are over 53,000 independent smaller publishers in the USA alone **(11)**. Some of these companies do publisher peer-reviewed monographs but not many of them. I can confidently state that most of the presses recognized by academics in relevant disciplines, as where they would wish to submit their monographs, are in the list of those involved in this study. Obviously however most of the publishers who filled in the complete questionnaire and who were most open in interviews were those that really did believe in and were aiming to implement electronic solutions. There is a build in bias which I have tried to correct with my own less sanguine comments where appropriate.

There was a lot of evidence in these responses, verbal and written, but unfortunately the number of fully filled in questionnaires were not sufficient to present the evidence in the form of tables. It is my view that most tables produced in this type of research need (though do not get) so many qualifying footnotes as to make them very difficult to use. There will be a lot of impressions in this study but I hoped they will be informed impressions and I shall try always to give evidence for my opinions where I can.

Many respondents found the form of the questionnaire (when it arrived) too overpowering. Some were grateful for it in the sense that they considered working through it was an educational experience but working through it did not mean that they necessarily filled it in. Unlike librarians, publishers are constitutionally averse to filling in questionnaires. I have some personal experience of this as a problem   see my Trends in Journals Subscriptions 1998 **(12)**. The low level of response to this questionnaire was therefore not surprising even though all those sent the questionnaire had agreed to fill it in. Even as I write this (February 2001) some individuals are promising returns soon. Some who could not fill in what they were sent pleaded lack of time, additional management burdens and the like, and some felt that they could use their time more valuably actually publishing books. One non-responder told me she had repeatedly taken the questionnaire with her on her train journeys, had annotated it and found it very useful in the context of in-house strategic discussions but in the end had not got down to filling it in. Others held meetings and allocated bits to be filled in by specific staff members but never got round to completion because someone did not delivery their filled in section   or so I was told.

There is another factor that must be taken into account. Very few publishers understand on a personal and practical level all aspects of their business. It is said that there were once figures who did   the legendary Sir Stanley Unwin (a UK publisher active in the middle of the last century whose books used to be given to beginners in the business) is frequently quoted as an example of a giant from the past. In the electronic environment where precedent (of great importance in publishing decisions) does not hold sway and is indeed discouraged as a reason for action, lack of knowledge is a problem.

I also want to draw attention to my use of the responses to the questionnaire throughout this study. I deliberately built in some redundancy into the questions in the sense that I approached the same problems in different contexts with a view to making sure that there was a check on all answers. This has meant some redundancy in the answers and some of the same points made are repeated in the different contexts e.g. the impact of the decline in the share of library budgets devoted to books on the sales of monographs.

I have followed through the principles I set out in Trends (see above) that include an avoidance of taking answers too literally. It is clear in some cases that the person filling in the questionnaire just did not understand some of the questions. This could be obviously due to a simple misreading. In the case of one large publisher, the questionnaire result gave over two thirds of the total book output as monographs yet the interview record makes clear that the proportion of monographs on the list was between ten and fifteen per cent. There were also occasions where conversations

(usually with a person from an editorial or marketing background) revealed a misunderstanding about a technical issue. It would not have been appropriate to point out the misunderstanding to them at the time but it must be taken into account when writing up what I learnt from the conversation.

As I have already explained my original intention was to extract a range of scenarios for the development of e-monographs from the key publishers of print monographs. I did not succeed. The great majority of my respondents had not developed a general strategy translated into a scenario though towards the end of the work on the study there was some evidence (see section 6.2) some were groping towards such a strategy. Hence I adopted a short and conventional questionnaire for the library community (appendix 2)

Since I finished work on the body of this text, I have been involved in another project concerned with how most sectors of the publishing industry are responding to electronic possibilities. Indeed I have written the introductory essay on the response on scholarly publishing, which precedes the results of a detailed questionnaire **(13)**. I did not see any need to modify the conclusions already set out in this study but in a few cases I have added evidence as appropriate. Relevant here is the observation that the lack of a fully articulated strategy among scholarly publishers was very much confirmed.

2.2   Confidentiality and its consequences

Soon after I embarked upon this research, it became clear to me that I would not get proper responses from those participants in the information chain involved in writing and reading monographs and the intermediary functions in between unless I promised confidentiality. My aim was to get to the real perceptions of these communities rather than elicit the sort of quotation that might look good in a magazine article.

Publishers are remarkably reluctant to have their views recorded and presented. Few were really frank even in face-to-face interviews, though there were some notable exceptions, and there are some useful think pieces in print that I have quoted. I have also been fortunate in being given access to the internal thinking (expressed in a report to management) from two British publishers of relevance (see section 6.2).

I want to examine this shyness a little further. I am particularly keen on doing so because a misunderstanding of how and why publishers act as they do is prevalent in the library community. Following the traditions of the British National Bibliography Research Fund it behoves a cross-sectoral study like this one to try to shed light in these dark places. The shyness seemed to me to spring from three roots. In the first place publishers are rarely frank with either their authors or their readers (or more correctly the downstream intermediaries such as booksellers which relate to their readers). They project an idealised version of their internal processes to the former category and an idealised version of the product they are selling to the latter. It is not just commercial secrecy. Non-profit publishers always try to keep the faculty (in a university press) or the membership (in a learned society press) at a distance. Secondly there is a specific reason in this new electronic environment why publishers should keep their cards close to their chest. They are in a competitive situation. They want to get an advantage over

their competitors. They are looking for the fabled killer app as one publisher actually told me. Finally most publishers really do not have a clear strategy and are slightly embarrassed about it. I shall examine this problem with strategy at greater length when I discuss policies below, but for the moment I want to relate this embarrassment back to the first root identified. Publishers want to be seen as being in charge of their destiny and that of their authors; they want to be the experts on publishing.

The reluctance to be quoted was not just a feature of the responses of the publishing community. I was surprised by the preference of senior academics not to be named and quoted. For reasons that I shall explain below I did not interview librarians but have relied on a questionnaire. In the questionnaire I promised confidentiality.

I have therefore not attached any views to anyone I talked to or communicated with by e-mail. I shall however try to give some indication of the status and provenance of views I do give so that a reader can make their own judgements on the probable representative nature of what is being proposed or projected.

2.3   Drawing lessons from the serials sector

Throughout my work on this project I have been struck relationship between what was happening in the world of science and medical journals (STM) in the last decade and what is happening now in the world of monographs in the humanities. I have already drawn attention to these similarities and differences. It is not surprising that the discoveries made (often painfully) in electronic journals publishing are not known to those engaged in monograph publishing. Publishing is remarkably compartmentalised, though it is less so than it was.

I consider that appropriately drawn parallels could be useful to monograph publishers and I have attempted to make them. Such parallels are also made by some of those whom I interviewed or who answered my questionnaire and I have drawn attention to them where it seemed to me to relevant to do so.

2.4 The persistence of the information chain?

Much writing about electronic publishing makes assumptions about how the changes in modes of communication will impact on the traditional relationships in the information chain. Are we looking at major changes in the roles of the current players, as part of an inexorable process consequent on the intrinsic nature of the new electronic environment? Do the existing functions if not the players continue in spite of the change from a print to an electronic format?

Once again if one looks to the STM journals environment there are some examples of significant polarisation of thinking about this issue within the information chain. A representative of higher education funding in the UK can suggest that the object of his (our) funding is to bring authors and readers together directly without the mediation of publishers **(14)**. One can attend a conference one week at which a distinguished scientist suggests that libraries should be disbanded and the funding transferred to

departments. At another venue a well-publicised thinker argues for and is acting to achieve the disappearances of publishers as we know them.

Much of this (often heated) debate has yet to hit the more sober world of scholarly monographs, though it is a commonplace on the various e-book sites which are concerned with trade publishing **(15)**.

I did ask publishers a series of questions to get their views on disintermediation. I record the responses here

Section 15 of my questionnaire was concerned with concepts to do with the information chain. I was interested in perceptions rather than practical experience and referred back (though not explicitly) to some of the thinking concerned with electronic journals. Interestingly opinions were more or less equally divided as to whether publishers faced the possibility of being disintermediated. I was interested in the negative view of the publishing role that was demonstrated by the following answers both from large presses:

> Probably but not for some time to come
> There will be space for more self-mounting of research in universities, but this
will probably as in the past be seen as less than full publication

I have taken up this second comment elsewhere (7.1).

Another robust view   No, I think it will disintermediate the librarian   was unfortunately not expanded on.

I also asked about the book trade. Again there was a divergence of views. One publisher asked the question: Realistically why would a publisher need them . The obvious follow-up question would be   do you think the library and the individual purchaser will not need aggregation? Actually however the author of this comment was probably thinking of booksellers as they are now. Other comment looked towards their transformation. One publisher saw the book trade as already adjusting to the new delivery technology , which seems to me fair comment. Another respondent considered that electronic marketing like high street retailing is a skill, and   publishers will need to buy it in   a rather different point.

I asked the same sort of question about librarians   what would their role by in an electronic environment? There was no general view. One publisher saw their role as more valuable because navigation in the electronic environment is more difficult. Another put the alternatives   They may be defunct, or reconfigure themselves into electronic librarians, providing expertise but not product.

Finally I asked about the new players, the new intermediaries described as partners in section 6.3. The comments were interesting. Not all publishers, especially those interviewed, could see an enduring role. To one university press in the USA such intermediaries were opportunistic like street sellers . Others were more positive and probably reflected the experience of journal publishing where subscription agents seem

to be reinventing themselves in the electronic environment, though the story in that sector is not yet ended. One commercial publisher wrote: aggregation of access remains a strength.

My own view is that the intermediary players in the information chain (authors, publishers and their suppliers, vendors of various sorts, librarians) will remain part of the process as long as they add value. I shall try to draw out the nature of the value being added when examining the processes involved in later sections of this study.

It is of course the nature of the value added rather than the players themselves that suggests their continued role. There is no reason why (as is happening) that librarians/libraries should not take over the publishing role though they have to act as publishers or so it seems to me. One argument I would like examine further comes out of the projects considered in section 5, where the suggestion is made that functions representing added value may be exercised by players working together rather than separately and in the linear fashion we are used to in the print environment.

B: The Monograph in Print

Part of the thesis of this study is that the possibility of electronic solutions cannot be detached from an understanding of the role of the monograph now and the current economics of monograph publishing. Section 3 discusses the context in scholarship (3.1 to 3.3); scholarly monograph publishing as viewed by publishers (3.4); and alternative ways of disseminating research (3.5) that do not rely on an electronic solution. Section 4 attempts to make sense of the crisis (4.1 and 4.2); goes on to examine publishing economics (4.3 to 4.5); and concludes with a brief look at an apparent paradox (4.6).

3. THE ROLE OF THE MONOGRAPH

I have already, in reiterating my original submission, touched on the special role in the humanities of what I understand for the purposes of this study as a monograph. I shall now begin by establishing the validity of this understanding, and then go on to look at the position of the monograph as the way research is communicated in certain disciplines. It is my impression that the purpose of the monograph (in my definition) is not fully understood by some commentators. I shall then proceed to the relationship between the pressure to publish in this form and the route to academic tenure and promotion. Finally I shall look at ways in which the scholarly publishing environment may change, might actually be changing or (from the point of view of some) should be changed.

My aim is to look at the intersection where the wishes/needs of the academic community impact on the activities of the publishing companies that serve this community.

In this section I am looking at the print environment, which means the current environment. Electronic solutions are for the future. There is a regrettable tendency in discourse about electronic possibilities to write as if electronic products/versions were really on the market in a serious way in the scholarly context. They are not. Even in the serials context, where the great majority of the major scholarly journals are now online, to a very large extent these are electronic versions of a normative print version and there has been very little progress in the development of electronic-only journals after almost a decade.

3.1 The definition of a monograph

In this section I am concerned not with a dictionary definition but with usage within the context of this study

In the e-world, there is a tendency to shorthand if not necessarily acronyms. B2B is universally understood to mean business-to-business commerce and contrasted with B2C business-to-consumer that is currently an unfashionable area of enterprise. P2P could conveniently have been adopted as the shorthand for peer-to-peer, as indeed it has, but these peers are those downloading music through the agency of Napster (www.napster.com) and similar enterprises. There are assumptions of disintermediation here, which have already been discussed. Following my line of description the type of publication this study is concerned with could be characterised as R2R (researcher-to-researcher) because this relationship is the distinguishing mark of the genre

If this sort of e-jargon puts you off here is a definition from a distinguished practitioner:

> The monograph is a large, specialized work of scholarship that treats a narrow topic in great detail. Size is a critical characteristic, because it distinguishes the monograph from the article, which has the same purpose, but is small. The monograph is the product of a large project usually carried out by an individual scholar. It presents what the scholar has concluded is the truth about some set of historical events, the characteristics of some work of art or literature or the biography of a historical figure, an artist or a writer. This list does not exhaust the categories of possible topics of monographs, but makes the general point that monographs are principally about establishing facts or narratives in a set of fields in which facts and narratives are often hard to establish. Together with critical reviews and articles, monographs provide the foundations for general explanations in these fields.

> The usefulness of the monograph is field-specific. It has played an important role in the humanities but not in other disciplines. The natural and social sciences carry out their business principally through articles and books (sic) **(16)**.

. In my questionnaire for publishers (part 2) I defined monographs as follows:

> (They are) books, which are records of primary research intended for other researchers and bought mainly by libraries In (certain) disciplines such work

represents the main channel for communication of research and is recognised as such for purposes of tenure and promotion.

All those who answered the questionnaire accepted the proffered definition though not were rigorous in following it when answering questions.

One highly experienced publisher did observe also that books are sometimes described as monographs by publishing management <u>because</u> they are not expected to sell. This is rather sad. In scientific publishing monograph is now almost always used as a pejorative term but in scientific disciplines the function of the research book is somewhat different from the function of what we are describing. In science too there is a tendency to differentiate between monographs (books written a single author or a small group of researchers acting as a single author) and a multi-authored book where an editor or editors brings together a group of specialists who author the individual chapters. Because of the nature of the monograph in the humanities we can ignore these compendia.

Obviously the definition is not watertight or self-evident. In this section we are concerned with the front-end (as it were) of the information chain, in the interaction between authors and publishers. At the far end librarians tend to classify any publication that is not a serial as a monograph but confusedly sometimes view series of monographs as serials. There are also conference proceedings that we can also ignore. They are in any case, while a significant medium of transmission for (say) engineers, not of importance in the humanities

Armstrong & Lonsdale, representing a library viewpoint, define monograph publishing for his purposes as a single learned work on a defined topic (or series of topics) *used for, or in the course of, tertiary education or research"* [italics indicate his quotation marks]. This definition includes textbooks defined as a category of monograph having the prescribed purpose of teaching **(17)**. These definitions suit the purpose of this previous study but limit the usefulness of some of the generalisations for the argument of this one. We are concerned with purpose of the publication as well as/rather than its use.

There is another distinction that it is necessary to make here which relates to the use of monographs in the teaching/learning context. As we shall see below (6.3) one of the delivery channels for scholarly e-books frequently mentioned as Questia **(18)**. Questia provides a resource for students writing what in North America are called term papers . The writing of term papers is a common feature of courses in the humanities. If Questia personnel are asked if they are looking for monographs for this service, the answer is positive and only further probing reveals that they are not looking for straight R2R publications, what they might call specialist monographs . Rather they are including in the same sort of frame as textbooks, books which are works of synthesis at a high level indeed and of interest to other scholars but not primary research only. Both publishers and academics alike understand this distinction but it can probably only be made crystal clear by examples.

3.2 The monograph in research communication

In section 1 I have already touched on the role of the monograph as the vehicle of research in certain disciplines. When I submitted my proposal I had in mind a consideration of the behaviour of academics across the humanities and the social sciences.

In responses to the questionnaire and in interviews, research monographs were generally perceived as a class of publication particularly relevant to history and literature. Most but not all publishers viewed the monograph in the social sciences as less important in the sense that a research monograph was not the way that most social sciences (with exceptions like anthropology) communicated their research. Other areas mentioned as characteristically monograph disciplines were classical studies, religion, archaeology etc.

I have particularly concentrated on the role of the research monograph in the discipline of history. I would suggest that monographs are more important for historians than they are in most fields. Historians for some reason seem to be more vocal and more organised than scholars in (say) literature who share many of the same problems. I was also fortunate in gaining interviews with a number of key players on both side of the Atlantic and have made use of this.

3.3 The role of the monograph in promotion and tenure

Scholars at any stage in their career write monographs. However the concept of the first book is central to many subjects.

Because the problem publishers have with publishing these first books , derived from theses/dissertations, is intrinsic to the crisis analysed below, I shall not do much more than state the role here.

Historians, as an example, characteristically spend three or more years working for a higher degree. During that period they produce a thesis. The thesis is examined and accepted and they are awarded the higher degree. When, however, they go for a job or later when they seek tenure or promotion it is expected that the word embodied in the thesis will be given open to the further scrutiny of being published. It is also expected that the offering of a historian to the demands (in the UK) of the research assessment exercise (RAE) will include a book of what I have called an R2R type.

It is the problem existing on both sides of the Atlantic for the group which the Edward Mellon Foundation calls junior scholars that has prompted at least one of its major investments (see section 5.4)

I shall go on later to make further reference to the belief (very prevalent but not yet changing practice) that the pressure to publish a monograph in this way is not essential or even desirable. However I would like to quote now a defence of the usefulness of the monograph in general by Bonnie Collier, a Yale librarian **(19)**:

(My statistics) suggest that the monograph s role, at least in the historical scholarship, is being trivialized by administrators, librarians and scholars themselves, who seem to have forgotten that monographs are not simply tools for career advancement .

She continued to give some further examples:

❑   Single monographs have plotted whole new directions for research in the humanities.
❑   They are are more important to forming scholarly thought and argument than other types of sources.
❑   They have also formed the building blocks on which great books of synthesis rest.

3.4 The role of monographs on the list of the publisher

I have already explained the nature of the sample of publishers I interacted with (section 2.2). Questions 2-8 of my questionnaire attempted to draw out from these companies the position of monograph publishing in their own programmes and any changes in this position. Interviews supplemented this information.

The general picture was of a declining number of monographs as a percentage of an overall list of books, which was usually increasing. One large humanities and social sciences publisher had a different picture with over two thirds of the list viewed by them as monographs and not declining as a percentage of a list growing from a high base. Another major publisher, also publishing more books 1999-2001, showed the percentage of monographs declining from 40% and 25% and another going down from 26% to 10% over the same period. Another publisher described the monograph component of their list going down from 60% to 40%. The aim in general was to do more textbooks or books that might be used as textbooks, and books with trade potential. There was rarely a positive view of monographs. Indeed one university press mentioned that the term was used internally as a synonym for books not expected to make money and were certainly not seen as generating surplus or profit.

Unfortunately I did not go back further than 1999 to see if the decline started before then. The interesting article by Ken Wissoker argues that in 1997 an expanding number of monographs were being published, though probably not in the same disciplines as before. He summarises his article by the following statement:

Perhaps when people say that the monograph is dying, that a certain type of work that would have publishable 25 years ago might not be so today. Isn t this like saying that the same work that was so interesting then is no longer interesting now, or that what once was a reasonable dissertation topic no longer seems appropriate **(20)**.

His views were not overwhelmingly well received then. For example Sanford (Sandy) Thatcher of Pennsylvania State University Press produced statistics, which seemed to

demonstrate a decline in monograph output from members of the Association of American University Presses (AAUP). His analysis suggested that between 1993 and 1995 the increase in titles was only one per cent and he goes on:

> I am confident that any close examination of catalogues from these presses would show a decline in the number of monographs relative to other kinds of books that presses have increasingly added to their mix. And I feel even more confident that the number of monographs published in the most endangered fields   literary criticism, European history etc   has diminished significantly in the 1990s **(21)**.

I think we can take assume that fewer scholarly monographs are now being published than was the case a few years ago.

3.5 The transformation of research communication?

Concern over the role of the monograph in scholarly communication has been voiced for some years. The perceived crisis will be examined in section 4.2. I now however want to examine further the following question. Are monographs and in particular are first books a necessary part of scholarly endeavour which publishers and librarians in their respective roles have to support by publishing or purchase. Again we look at history as a discipline.

In the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) the influential British historian Dr. David Cannadine has set out some trenchant views:

> British historians are churning out books and articles with all the frenzied energy of battery chickens on overtime but no one is reading them **(22)**.

His concern that over-production is damaging the profession of historians itself and selling the public short was to a greater or lesser extent confirmed by others I spoke to and (tacitly) by some of the publishers.

A number of solutions were put to me. These do not necessarily involve electronic publishing so I am describing them here though some are just as applicable to the electronic environment   as we shall see. The arguments here are from British sources but there is no evidence that they do not represent international opinion.

It is suggested that young scholars in particular should write up their theses as a series of articles in the way that scientists do on the basis that journals publishing is in a more healthy position and can accommodate more articles and presumably more journals. This understanding of the economics of serials will surprise librarians.

The objection is that the sort of primary research that comes out of theses and indeed represents the way in which the historian works does not lend itself to being cut into smaller chunks. Historians need space. Some years ago a small British university press published a series of books entitled Themes in Urban History. Each book contained a

number of contributions smaller than a separate monograph but much longer than a journal article. The series is now defunct. It is probable that it did not sell.

Another approach, which has been fostered by the AHRB (the UK Arts and Humanities Research Board), is to influence more collaborative work by those they fund in line with the norm in science and also to a large extent in the social sciences. It is likely that published work coming from research of this sort will by necessity also be collaborative. It has been suggested to me that any change in the way that historians work is likely to be gradual but that there could be some sort of impact from the way funding is being granted within a decade. I was also told by a prominent historian interested in these issues that he knew of some scholars who now tended to write collaborative works with research students, who exposed their work in this way rather than in separate monograph publications.

At the same time it has also been argued that too many research articles are being published. In the UK those running the Research Assessment Exercise in some scientific disciplines have made it clear to those submitting their publications that articles in peer-reviewed electronic-only journals will not be discriminated against because of the medium. It was also anticipated that asking scholars to submit only four pieces of work (over four years) might also reduce the number of journal articles being written and submitted. A number of prestige institutions such as the Harvard Medical School made clear that they wanted quality and not quantity in the list of publications submitted to them for jobs or tenure.

This argument drawn from scientific disciplines is represented in the *Principles for Emerging Systems of Scholarly Publishing* jointly agreed by representatives of the American Association of University Presses (AAUP), the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL):

> Reduce the emphasis on the quantity of publications in evaluating a professor s work **(23)**.

Should the thesis be published at all when dissertations, once buried in university libraries, have for long been easily available in microform collections and now online?

4.   THE ECONOMICS OF MONOGRAPH PUBLISHING

In 1999 Robert Baldock of Yale University Press wrote:

> The monograph has been in crisis for a generation, and is now in meltdown. For publishers the specialist book has long been an open wound, haemorrhaging capital: libraries which used to be good for an order which underwrote the costs of publication, now select between scholarly hardbacks, while spending most of their budget on serials **(24)**.

This short quotation neatly encapsulates some of those themes that we shall develop below.

In the previous section (3.4) we have already suggested that there is a decline in monograph publishing on the basis of mainly US evidence. Now below I want to set out some perceptions from the UK and then quote some US views.

4.1 The crisis examined: the view from within one discipline and some other comments.

I changed the title of this study so that the word crisis in was replaced by problems of because I felt it to be inappropriate to prejudge the issue. However my research left me in little doubt that there is a crisis   at least for the great majority of publishers, their authors and readers and indeed for librarians too.

I wanted to establish the nature of the crisis. Is it different from the previous crises in monograph publishing and if so how? In any areas of publishing there is never any shortage of quotes to show that things were bad in the past too. There are complaints about too many publications dating back centuries. **(25)**.

Let us look at the situation of History and historians in the UK.

A senior historian associated with the Royal Historical Society (RHS) has shared with me his recollections. His perception was that during the 1970s there was a widespread perception that young scholars were having problems getting their theses (dissertations) published. The RHS, under the leadership of Professor Geoffrey Elton responded by starting their own series. This series made use of cheaper production methods and was a pioneer of in-house typesetting   what we might now call desktop publishing. At that time the costs of production, particularly typesetting, represented a major problem for profitability.

What happened? The publishing industry reacted by seeking new ways of serving the community. The RHS series was superseded and towards the end of its time in its previous form was only publishing two volumes a year. It was suggested to me that a new breed of commercial houses, exemplified by Croom Helm, came along with offers of no-frills publishing including low royalties and the use of camera-ready copy. At the same time more traditional publishers began to improve their print buying and generally smarten up their act.

The Royal Historical Society has responded to the current crisis by publishing about six books based on theses in the year **(26)**. In the last year, there were (or so I am told) about twenty submissions of quality. The RHS believe that they make the financials work by doing all the editorial work and receiving only a small royalty from the publisher they work with. I am not aware whether or not this makes a profit for the publisher concerned. The apparent success of this enterprise, albeit on a small scale, does not however accord with the experience of the publishers quoted in the next sub-section.

One historian in a position to overlook the British historical scene felt that in fact most theses were in the end published but this was not the majority view from within the profession. There are currently (year 2000) 3390 history theses in progress in the UK. Obviously some of these are never completed and others not accepted. Some with doctorates do not proceed into academic life. Most historians have no doubt that some of these dissertations, offered for publication, do not get published with consequent problems for the author job market (see 3.3 above).

The British perception was encapsulated in the conference entitled Is the Monograph Dead? held at the Institute for Historical Research on 15 December 1999. Unfortunately there is no statistical backup for this perception.

Hard data from the USA is said to be on its way from another study financed by the Andrew Mellon Foundation (again), which is being led by Colin Day, the director of the University of Michigan Press for the Association of American University Presses. It is a four-year grant starting in late 1999 or early 2000 **(27)**.

The Chronicle of Higher Education reports **(28)** that:

> Researchers will ask faculty members to describe how university presses have responded to manuscripts they have submitted and whether they are beginning to approach different kinds of publishers. The study will also look at whether some disciplines are more inclined than others to publish research online, and how publishing on the Web affects hiring and tenuring decisions.

It is said that some results will trickle out soon, which is good news because four years is a long time to wait.

Back in 1997 there was an extremely useful collection of papers derived from a conference of librarians, scholars and university presses entitled *The Specialized Scholarly Monograph in Crisis or How Can I Get Tenure if You Won't Publish My Book* **(29)**. The convenor Kate Torrey of North Carolina University Press made some introductory comments that are as relevant now as they were then and are particularly relevant to this study. She is recorded as saying:

> (Those attending the conference can) complicate the way in which we understand scholarly communication. The working assumption is that the issues for each group are incompletely or inaccurately understood by the other groups.

She looks at the crisis:

> I want to anticipate two responses, which I hope will be debated during the conference: first, that there is no crisis; and second, that scholarly communication is perpetually in a state of crisis, with a golden era being visible only in the rear-view mirror. Although our present circumstances did not spring full-blown in recent days, and cannot therefore be called new in a journalistic sense, this crisis   is being felt more keenly than in the past. Thus, it may be

that out of this conference grows a commitment to continue the work started here. After all, in crisis there is opportunity.

It would be invidious and inappropriate to relate what is said in this symposium by individual university presses and compare it with their progress with e-programmes since then. However a reasonable generalisation would be that e-monographs have taken longer to get off the ground than each successive projection suggests   though perhaps this is changing. Perhaps the time has come.

4.2 The crisis examined: the pessimism of the publishers

The responding publishers had their views on the nature of the crisis too.

The article by Baldock demonstrates pretty strong views as we have seen from the quotation at the head of this section. He has a solution to the crisis that we shall go into later.

Other publishers essentially agree but have a different emphasis. The director of one smaller British university press writes: Crisis is probably the wrong word. The nature of this type of publishing has changed and demands a different approach . He does not expand on this view.

The managing director of a British commercial house has a historical perspective that is worth quoting, even if no solution is implied. His view is that:

> The perceived crisis can be seen as a return to normalcy after an exceptional period in the 1960s and 1970s in which library demand exceeded available supply. This was the high period of educational welfare state as one of my authors described it

Several publishers volunteered analyses. The problem was at base an imbalance between the consumer and the producer . This chimes in with the views of David Cannadine quoted in section 3. Another publisher spoke more concretely of shrinking library budgets, shrinking book budgets and a large number of competing titles . I do not have any statistical justification for the last statement, which seems surprising given the comments made by others. The figures available on the number of books published do not break down in a way, which enables research monographs to be picked out.

The statistics on library cuts back up this statement and statements like it. The book budget has been cut at the expense of the serial budget **(30)**. I shall go into the librarians perception of this sad state of affairs in section 7.

I asked what the impact of the crisis was on publishing policy. The obvious answer is to do fewer monographs and to shift more resources to general interest books and other less unprofitable lines. Another publisher wrote: It is clear that if the proportion of monographs on our list is too high, we will not survive as a business.

One small university press always looks for subsidies. Subsidies are surprisingly not mentioned by other publishers. There are those in publishing who find the financial implications of subsidies unpalatable because they do not take into account the issue of opportunity costs . The editor concerned with the particular book could be spending his or her time doing something of more interest to the company. It looks as if reliance on subsidies for individual publications is no longer the flavour of the month. A report (privately provided) on the meeting at the Institute of Historical Research, mentioned elsewhere, confirms this view:

> Subsidy is one solution that might perhaps have expected to be referred to frequently at the meeting. In fact it wasn t. Both the main academic publishers and individual scholars did not regard this as the solution at all .

4.3 The publishing experience unpacked: print runs and sales

In my questionnaire I laid out a series of questions relating to print runs (Q11-14) and I was able from the returns and from interviews to get some gratifyingly hard information both on the print runs and changes in the print runs and indeed subsequently on pricing.

This question elicited a different response depending on where the publisher was located. In the US print runs might go down from 1500 to 1000 but in the UK they could go down to 400. This was a question much answered so here are the results from different presses:

The following companies, based in the United Kingdom gave the following information about their print runs for monographs:

❑ Within five years the print run has gone down from 800 to 400 and the projection is now of as low as 250 with expectation of small reprint.
❑ Our usual print run is likely to be down to as low as 200 in the future
❑ Our current runs are between 400 and 600.
❑ Our lowest print run of 800   this from a social sciences publisher.
❑ 800 or lower
❑ Our print runs for monographs are often as low as 400.

US companies gave the following responses:

❑ 1000 to 500 and to 250 if print on demand is established.
❑ Now between 1500 and 1000
❑ Not lower than 800 but may do 200 with print on demand in the future   a university press.
❑ We prints 750 but do not sell out (small university press)
❑ Our lowest print run is 1000
❑ Our lowest print run is 800

- The lowest print run is 3-400 (this rather stands out and is the information given by a commercial press specialising in monograph publishing).
- A non-profit press does as low as 1000 but their list probably contains few monographs in really specialist areas with no hope of additional sales

How are we to take these figures? I have no reason to suppose any of my respondents were not telling the truth but there has to be some doubt about exactly what they mean. Let me explain by an extensive quotation from an article written by Sandy Freitag **(31)**. Ms Freitag was at the time this was written by her executive director of the American Historical Association.

She begins:

> In sadly repetitive conversations over the last two months, six different scholarly publishers have raised the same issue with me; their fear for the demise of the scholarly monograph   Not long ago, presses could do 1,000   copy print runs, trusting to a library market for the bulk of their orders, and to individuals to fill round the edges.

She goes on to state the reasons for the decline in take-up (expensive commercial journals cutting books out of library budgets), which we have already touched on and then continues:

> Presses, in their turn, have used several strategies to cope with these changing circumstances. The first strategy is often to cut print runs. Many presses have reduced their typical print runs from 1,000 to 750. When titles only sell 350 to 450 copies in the first three years however, and this is often now the case, this strategy does not allow presses to recoup production or inventory costs.

She then goes on to discuss the use of docutech and other strategies including the bleakest (cutting out whole less commercial sub-disciplines).

Some of those points I shall take up elsewhere but my revelation now is the date this was written. It was October 1995.

There is some mismatch here. I think there are several reasons for the apparent discrepancy.

In the first place what was an exceptionally low print run for some (but not I suspect) many presses then is now the norm now. Secondly the number of submissions (manuscripts offered) which are not judged to be commercially viable by any standards and not accepted for that reason has probably grown   though I have only anecdotal evidence for this. Thirdly I suspect there was quite a bit of reprinting then. My question about reprinting of monographs met with a very dusty response. Only one publisher admitted to reprinting monographs in any circumstances. I suspect the strategy of reprinting in paperback, which used to obtain in some British houses even for quite specialist books, is no longer followed to anything like the same extent though I did not ask this question.

The mention of print on demand and (in 1995) Docutech is interesting and will be returned to later in this study (6.6) as I am treating this technology as part of an electronic solution   perhaps erroneously   for reasons, which I shall explain in situ.

Obviously print runs relate to anticipated sales. I shall look at sales and profits below (section 4.5)

4.4 The publishing experience unpacked: pricing and cost control

In section 5 of my questionnaire I explored two related questions, which represent strategies for dealing with declining sales in the print environment.

One strategy is to increase the price of the book. In terms of pricing there was an extraordinary similarity of responses from publishers answering the questionnaire about their usual pricing of monographs. The UK norm worked at £40-50 and the US norm at $40-50. There are some publishers pricing higher in both countries and in certain disciplines in particular. I suspect this is especially true of the UK, though this did not come out in the responses to the questionnaires.

In both cases it is my picture that the price of these monographs makes them unlikely purchases for individual scholars unless the topic is central to their research interests. My perception of these thresholds are £25.00 in the UK and $39.95 in the US. I am sure others have different views. There are a number of points worth making:

❑ UK monograph prices have always been higher than US prices, like for like, but it seems to me that the differential is less great than it used to be. I did not follow up this question so this comment should be taken in that spirit. The US publisher used to be able to rely on more library sales than the UK publisher and always aimed to price within the reach of individual scholars.
❑ Only one publisher mentioned the nature of their pricing calculation (which was six times unit cost   the traditional publishing metric). This is a low multiple in the circumstances described and the calculation is unlikely to have been done in that way.
❑ I think we are assuming a 80,000 word and 250 printed page book, though this was not mentioned.

Prices absolutely and in terms of price per page are going up, have done and will do. One wrote   we price monographs as high as we can

There is not a big move towards shorter monographs but one publisher said that they did ask for cuts though others said there was no strategy. This is something of a surprise.

The idea which I ascribed to a NY Times article, but which I cannot find by a search, that monographs should be published without scholarly apparatus to save money got very little support as it is half-baked

How do you save money on publishing monographs?

 Price aggressively and printed short is a general statement. More specifics mentioned are cuts in marketing, in production values including asking for camera ready copy and no plates , reduced author royalties and using foreign typesetters. The interesting thing is that some presses still pay royalties (it is suggested elsewhere that university presses do not) and the comment about Far Eastern suppliers shows there is scope for saving. Nothing new there.

What is interesting is restricting publishing to series is not actually mentioned but it is a strategy much used as it saves significantly on marketing costs. As Ms Freitag (see 4.3 for the source) writes:

> In order to successfully market a book, a press needs to be able to fit it into a larger cluster of titles. Once a press has a presence in a field, readers interested in that subject know how to look at that press s catalog. Also, having a cluster makes it financially more rewarding for a press to have exhibits at scholarly meetings, to advertise in related journals, or to do direct mail marketing to names selected for their interest in that topic.

I expect that this point was too obvious one to make for the companies I spoke too. I shall return to bundling in sections 5 and 8.

I could have asked further questions in this section to try to discern whether publishers were using all the conventional cost control methods they might have in their arsenal but I did not. I suspect that they have not yet done a Croom Helm (see 4.1). There may be scope for savings in print, particularly typesetting (composition). Making more use of the capacity of the author to produce final versions of the required is a tactic which is just as relevant in the print as in the electronic environment. Likewise the possibilities represented by the newer approaches to print-on-demand (see section 6.6) can be seen as making possible the survival of the print monograph without recourse to an electronic solution   though I do not myself see it that way.

4.5 The publishing experienced unpacked: sales and profits

The following section records publisher responses, which relate to questions 23-30 combined with evidence from interviews and other sources. To some extent this is an amplification of what has already been demonstrated in the sections 4.1 and 4.2. In particular I have discussed at some length why publishers still produce books that can never make them money.

Not surprisingly all the publishers in the survey reported a decline in sales and suggested that it would continue. The usually percentage quoted when actual figures were given was five per cent per year, which seems low bearing in mind the earlier reporting of a more rapid drop in print runs. It may however mean that cuts in print runs have been getting rid of customary slack over printing. Inventory control has for some time now been a major pre-occupation of publishing accountants. Looking to the

future, respondents also anticipated a continued decline in sales at much the same rate per year.

Libraries continued to be the main destination for most of these books. One of the reasons why reference to serials publishing is relevant to a study of research monographs is the similar reliance on library purchase.

I asked question 25 to see if the responses confirmed a suggestion made in one of the interviews of an increased individual purchase to make up for the decline in library holdings. Only one respondent confirmed that this might be the case but I nevertheless cling to the possibility that there might be a slight trend here, based on anecdotal evidence in part and on the basis of other work I have done that is not publicly available. In public presentations Amazon.com suggest one way in which greater individual book buying might be achieved   through them. They have certainly attempted to increase their coverage of monographs.
The evidence of a similar trend from the publication of humanities and social sciences journals is neither conclusive nor clear.

In the case of serials, personal purchase may lead to a regular transfer of issues to at least smaller (departmental) libraries though probably not larger ones. Publishers of monographs of course have a lot more problems trying to find out the end-purchaser of their books because sales are rarely direct.

Other work also appears to show that there has not been much of an increase in inter-library loan of monographs. One might have expected some increase in view of the severe cuts in buying books and move to a Just in Time policy environment in libraries.

There is general agreement that sales of monographs are declining. There was near unanimity among the publishers interviewed and also those who filled in the questionnaire about the profitability of monograph publishing. A response (from a major US university press) is typical:

> It is simply not profitable. Monographs are not published to make money but to fulfil a scholarly obligation .

It was difficult to get publishers to admit that any monographs were profitable though some disciplines were less unprofitable for some presses and might even be perceived as covering costs. For example art history was less unprofitable than much of British history. This was true for UK as well as US presses: the American library market is crucial to all monograph publishers. It would have been nice to prepare a table showing the perceived or experienced profitability of different disciplines in the humanities but the replies received did not allow for a quantitative treatment, though individual presses must hold this information. It is almost certain that some areas of research present a special case (see Thatcher cited above in section 3.4) in urgent need of remedial action.

University presses characteristically subsidise their monograph publishing by publishing an increasing number of trade books and also textbooks or books that can be used as texts. US university presses in particular publish a lot of local books, which can be

considered trade. I shall return to this strategy in section 8. The question of the relationship of university presses to the business of making profits from their whole programme is a complex one and has been touched on above (1.6) insofar as it is relevant.

The larger commercial publishers, who specialise in monograph publishing, have to make money but they do not explain how they do it in this infertile field. One can assume that it is a combination of rigorous cost control, low print runs and high prices. The replies given to the questionnaire from this category seem to demonstrate that this is the strategy employed.

There was an interesting comment about how the situation is seen in some publishing houses from a university press. Their editors are expected to publish twenty-five books a year and, if they have too many monographs in their portfolio, their list overall becomes unprofitable. However it is understood that the history editor is under an obligation to publish more monographs   because of pressure from the Academy.

What is the nature of this obligation to publish unprofitable books? It is part of the relationship between the publisher and its author community mentioned elsewhere (1.2) There is also an element of a sprat to catch a mackerel . The first book may lead to a major and profitable work later. Your important author has research students that you have to consider favourably.

Wissoker (cited above) explains the relationship rather well:

> If a generally low level of sales is part of what characterizes a monograph, at least for publishers, why should they want to keep publishing them? Mostly because they see monograph publishing as a crucial component of having a reputation in a discipline. It is difficult for publishers to publish only the major books in a field. Authors like to be on a list with those they admire in their area of expertise   Editors work by having a sense of a whole field or subfield. We are as happy to publish a monograph that will make a young scholar s reputation as to publish the work of a distinguished person in a field, whose most significant work may already have appeared .

This is stirring stuff but as relevant to publishing attitudes as much as it was when written in 1997.

The overall picture is:

❑ Monographs are rarely profitable in any discipline and particular unprofitable in some.
❑ Fewer are being published.
❑ However they do continue to be published.

4.6 Where are all the submissions going?

I wanted to explore the suggestion, which was put to me, that there had been an increase in the number of manuscripts submitted. Hence I asked some questions (Q31-34)

Contrary to my expectations most presses reported fewer submissions which was in line with our publishing policy which discourages them as wrote one press. The overall decline went side by side with a decline in dissertations being offered. Where are they going?

It would have been nice to follow up this apparent phenomenon, which does not fit exactly with some of the other observations in this study, by getting responses from a larger sample. For the moment one can only guess. One historian I raised this question with suggested that in practice some of the younger scholars he knew were giving up and submitting articles to journals. Others may be just giving up.

C: Electronic publishing of Monographs

The next three sections of this study deal with electronic solutions. Section 5 draws out from what is available as experience or is on the way to provide experience. The new models being funded are in part conceived from outside publishing altogether and certainly from outside commercial publishing. Section 6 looks at what publishers plan. It analyses the main body of the questionnaire sent out to the publishing community. Section 7 covers problems of acceptance, one of the barriers described in section 6.7.

The context is electronic publishing of books of all sorts. As has already been mentioned, the models for book publishing have not yet been established although establishment is getting closer, and, since the body of the text was prepared, there have been a lot of developments, which cannot be dealt now. Even the new models described in section 5 are essentially work in progress.

5.   NEW MODELS

This section is concerned with guidance for the journey into the unknown. Where does the guidance come from? Librarians reading this should remember that publishers do not have the online discussion groups and other aids to decision making that they do. In the USA in particular there is a profound fear of joint initiatives and especially any discussions, which might be interpreted as discussing terms of business.

I have already mentioned the reluctance of individual publishers to set out their stalls (as it were) as far as their e-publishing plans are concerned. Some publishers, **(32)**, have described their plans in press releases for the benefit of their shareholders and others but the details of what they are planning are not clear. Why should they be? The positive impact is that the mere fact of such high-impact announcements being made does act as an encouragement to the rest of the industry.

A few toes have been dipped in the water but not much information about whether the water is hot or cold has become public knowledge. The lack of hard information about

the experience of putting books online from those publishers that have ventured to do so is striking. I did try to elicit some sort of steer in my questionnaire but with no useful feedback (see 5.6). In any case on the whole most publishers who have put parts of their list online have mainly chosen the less specialised part.

There are a number of sessions or seminars on e-books (which tend to be well-attended) on both sides of the Atlantic. In the UK for examples many of the regular sessions of the Electronic Publishers Forum of the Publishers Association have had useful talks on aspects of the field. It should however be noted that not all the presentations on these sort of occasions are really of use to publishers working with monographs. The speakers are often business-to-business people or technical experts who have worked with massive projects in reference or trade where enhancements (bells and whistles) are essentially to the market appeal of the product.

There are exceptions. On 28 February 2001 there was a talk to this particular forum on Building a Digital Archive by Cliff Morgan of John Wiley & Sons UK. Mr. Morgan is one of the real authorities on electronic production technology. Nevertheless the seminar was not well attended and not mostly by people working with scholarly books. I suspect the reason is that the title did not convey the centrality of the topic to the potential audiences. A digital archive is crucial if you want to see your books in electronic form from your site. I would guess that those concerned with decision-making have not themselves got far enough down the road to electronic books to recognise how central Mr. Morgan s talk was. Perhaps not surprisingly it is quite clear from the questionnaires and interviews that there is a general concern from almost all publishers about their (lack of) knowledge of the possibilities and the relevance of the possibilities to their own situation. This conflicts with the confidence shown in answers given by academic publishers to a more recent questionnaire, working with a smaller group of monograph publishers and not specifically asking about monographs **(33)**.

What is available to those without experience seeking guidance is quite a bit of information about what one of those interviewed called Demonstrator Projects . These are not generated entirely or at all from within publishing but are usually collaborative projects with libraries and/or learned societies. The purpose of this section is to look at these projects and examine what they offer to the constituency concerned with in this study. Are they relevant? Are they useful guides? What do they demonstrate?

I have discussed at some length three projects, which have a particularly high profile, and two important influences but there are other projects too which are less interesting because smaller and less open to scrutiny. I have decided that this is not the place to list all I have discovered but what they are doing does not add much to the projects located by Armstrong & Lonsdale (see appendix 3) in 1998.

It is interesting that all these projects are from the USA. The most likely body in our centralised country likely to sponsor any such a scheme in the UK is JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee of the Higher Education Funding Council of England and Wales) through their eLib and related programmes. Until very recently their interests have largely been elsewhere and certainly no demonstrator projects have been devised and implemented.

5.1   The Columbia University Online Books Evaluation Project

This project lasted from winter 1995 to autumn 1999. The final report is available **(34)**. Four publishers provided books for this project and they were a mixed collection of textbooks and monographs including some clusters of books. The nature of the content meant that the results were only partially relevant and there was a further drawback with the project. It was, as those responsible pointed out, begun too soon and had to look forward to an environment, which would be more favourable.

Although the meat of the project dealt with the user and librarian response to e-resources, there was a serious attempt to work out the costs to the publisher of producing and maintaining a digital book. The rubric covering the main interests of the project runs: Use, Satisfaction, Effect and Market Potential . They did produce a model which appears to be the production of online copy as an adjunct to the print-production process and the sale of a digital book for a flat fee followed by an annual fee for maintaining and refreshing the digital content. This model has not been taken up by any of those who were interviewed for or who filled in questionnaires for this project. It is primarily concerned with textbooks one would assume. However some aspects of the model are relevant and bear on some points, which will be returned to again. Details of the model can be found in the source indicated. Some comments are made here, which I owe in part to an authority on modelling publishing expectations:

❑ The report suggests that scholarly monographs are ideally suited to digital publishing because costs of printing are so expensive. There is however no real consideration of the size of the market and the print run on which the model is based is much higher than is normal for a monograph.
❑ It is unlikely that the annual fee approach could work for monographs though it might for textbooks and it is unlikely that publishers would be trusted by librarians to maintain content and access to the content over a long period of time. Few plans for archiving and preserving digital content have gone for this sort of solution.
❑ The assumption is that the digital book would be priced much the same as the physical book but then owned by the library cutting out for the publishers the possibility of multiple sales over a period of time. This is probably not such a problem for monographs (though it is for textbooks) and the concern about loss of sales has not loomed large in my discussions
❑ There is not really an appreciation of the costs of the infrastructure involved in electronic publishing either for the publisher or the librarian. As we shall see, no publishers have really thought through these costs but librarians are beginning to realise how expensive holding online material really is.
❑ The report says that online books would be most useful because of online features such as hyperlinks but these features are not costed. Who will bear them? Authors and publishers or (more likely) both. In any case the evidence suggests little enthusiasm by scholars for such enhancements

Nevertheless the following conclusions were reached, which are highly relevant. The quotations are from the report:

- It is argued that scholars become more efficient and possibly even more effective if they have access to their sources of knowledge online.
- Our research found that most of the use of scholarly books does not involve extended reading . This suggests less need for printing out that has usually been assumed.
- A scholar will be able to search across a whole subject category or a specified subset of online books, seeking terms relevant to his (sic) research . As we have seen research on serials has emphasised the importance of clusters
- As scholars became familiar with the use of monographs online, use grew though modestly.
- Scholars taking part in the project insisted on retaining pagination and other features used for navigation in a printed book. One can argue that these attachments will dwindle as the cohort engaged in scholarly research currently moves towards retirement and is replaced by one used to working online. On the other hand one could argue for some concepts developed by several centuries of print publishing having a continued use.
- The following scenario for publishers is worth recording in full:

   Within a few years, publishers should realize the potential of online books to enhance their profitability. They will redesign their production processes from directions-to-authors-on-formats through editing through typesetting to produce a digital version that can be put online easily. In this world, new works will be put online as soon as the print versions are produced, if not sooner. However, older monographic scholarly works will be republished only if publishers perceive sufficient demand to cover the costs to where more senior scholars will markedly change their patterns of research behaviour

You don t need to buy the whole picture to see that there is a lot in this vision, which is not only compelling but also rooted in a lot of practical thinking. As we shall see the economics assumed (for example in the last quotation) probably do not work out as well as one would like.

What is odd is that there appears from the experience I have gained in conducting this survey that there has been very little interest in this study by scholarly publishers seeking solutions. This is a pity.

Notwithstanding the above I shall return to aspects of the Columbia experience in the final section.

5.2   Darnton and his pyramid

The distinguished historian Professor Robert Darnton of Princeton and Oxford has provided the inspiration behind two of the projects I shall look at next.

The essence of Darnton s model is fairly clear. He explains it elsewhere as a pyramid. At the top is the traditional monograph and extending below are the mass of sources on which the monograph rests. He writes in 1999 **(35)**:

An e-book, unlike a printed codex, can contain many layers   Readers can download the text and skim through the topmost layer, which would be written like an ordinary monograph. If it satisfies them, they can print it out, bind it (binding machines can now be attached to computers and printers) and study it at their convenience in the form of a custom-made paperback. If they come upon something that especially interests them, they can click down a level to a supplementary essay or appendix. They can continue deeper through the book, through bodies of documents, bibliography, historiography, iconography, background music, everything I can provide to give the fullest possible understanding of my subject. In the end, readers will make the subject theirs, because they will find their own paths through it, reading horizontally, vertically or diagonally, wherever the electronic links may lead.

It is easy to see how attractive this concept is to a librarian and to administrators in higher education. In the UK the resonances with the DNER project (Distributed National Electronic Resource) are obvious. There are also similarities with the ideas of seamless linking from article to article in the journal environment and which provides the justification (as the ideal of the researcher) for such projects as PubMed Central and CrossRef. Journal publishers as well as the senior academic administrators behind PubMed and PubScience have now taken on board the fact (not always recognised) that journal literature does not exist in a vacuum but refers on to databases and informal e-print collections.

Nevertheless it is also easy to understand the reluctance of the great majority of publishers and even senior historians interested in research communication and e-publishing to take these ideas seriously   or so I found.

The problem is cost. The Darnton model would seem to make the traditional monograph even more expensive to produce. The cost of all that digitisation, all that structure and all those links is horrifying. If the monograph is specialised the sources are individually likely to be of interest to even fewer scholars. That is the perception of some I interviewed but the Darnton protagonists themselves take an opposite view, which I should record here **(36)**:

The design of Darnton s book seemed to answer one question posed in the discussion: what would be the readership for an electronic book? If different segments of the reading public can reach the different layers of an e-book such as Darnton s, then the audience can be much larger than that for the traditional printed book

If the pessimistic view is taken, the content of the monograph itself would have to be of a more synthetic nature or dumbed down if a wider audience paying for more copies/access is to be assumed. There is also more of a problem putting together and organising the range of extra material in other media than someone not familiar with the experience of journals might assume. The SuperJournal project (mentioned elsewhere in this study and referenced in appendix 3) was designed with a central aim of offering to scholarly authors the opportunity of making used of the enhanced functionality of the

Internet. That this offer would be taken up was given. The interest was in the use. In fact scholars did not provide dynamic digital objects   not at all. They were not able to devote the time creating these extras when the pressure to publish was so great. One of the projects below makes provision for part of the problem: time is funded. It is also true to say that the way a historian works with his or her sources is rather different from the way in which a scientist views the option of a rotating molecule even if the latter does make a point in the discussion rather well.

It is also interesting that this proposal should come from a historian. One can see much more use and interest in archaeology (site plans), language studies (audio) or art history (illustrations). The first two areas are particularly difficult ones for specialist monographs. If we look again at the experience of the Elib project in the UK, the e-journal project that really appeared to have worked (best) was one in archaeology where the enhancements had positive value **(37)**.

5.3 The crucial role of the Mellon Foundation

I shall return to what I see as the significance of the projects inspired by Darnton in the last section of this study but for the moment I want to look at one influence, which I was not able to follow up in my research by personal interview. That is the role of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and in particular the program on scholarly communication. No-one involved in scholarly communication in an intermediary function can afford to forget that it is what the authors and readers want that counts: this is where Mellon funding comes in because it is the communication as such which is central to their vision. JSTOR **(38)** is their big success story. Nevertheless the way Mellon approaches the issues involved does show a particular way of looking at them which from a publishing viewpoint is not the only or necessarily the most effective approach if electronic publishing is to develop.

How Mellon see its role is set out in the 1999 president s report **(39)**, which has a single primary focus on how the Foundation is addressing the impact of information technology (and especially digitisation) on scholarship, scholarly communication and libraries.

The emphasis on digitisation is significant because it reflects a particular way of thinking which it is worth unpacking here. Librarians tend to think in terms of digitisation. This is demonstrated by various programmes funded by the Higher Education sector in the UK such as the CEDARS project on archiving of digital content **(40)**. Much of what is digitised is not value-added (published) content but other types of material   resources. The Mellon Foundation has funded the Cornell-Michigan *Making of America* **(41)**, which was very much of this type. The Columbia project mentioned above involved digitising books, which were previously published in a print format. For the librarian there is a lot of satisfaction in working with a corpus of digitised resources. There is a common format and a common interface and the ability for the users to search across lots of different files preferably without branding (pages of publisher matter) getting in the way.

At present as we shall see (6.3) for most publishers the model has been publish in print and then get someone else (but not librarians) to digitise However the more enterprising

publishers and their authors (one suspects) do not see their work being made electronic in this way outside their control. The future must be (surely) for the born digital publication that is designed for the electronic environment. It is my perception that author and publisher want the integrity and authenticity of their work to be kept intact **(42)** and the publisher wants to maintain the branding. They want any plan for a resource to take into account different formats depending on different publishers serving authors who have sought them out for a variety of reasons. Publishers also adopt approaches to publication including formats because their research tells them that this is what their market wants and the market (the audience) varies from product to product and from discipline to discipline. Librarians have always found odd-sized books difficult to shelve but the odd size may best display the content for the benefit of both author and reader. This excursus is prompted by the President s Report but of course does not in any way suggest that these questions have not been considered by the Foundation. Indeed the projects described below are essentially born digital

5.4   The Gutenberg-e prizes

This is an annual award given to six writers of dissertations, which will give them time to produce an e-book from their research **(43)**.

William Strachan, the director of Columbia University Press, wrote about the project last year (2000) that what is aimed for is a publication, not merely the digitisation of information **(44)**. This is from an address at a workshop organised for the press corps to meet the first group of six prizewinners; this is big time. The article describing the occasion goes on to comment:

> The program primarily to meet two goals. First it seeks to publish dissertations in fields where the traditional monograph is endangered because of publishers commercial calculations. Second it hopes to blur the distinction conventionally made between the printed book and the e-book, through the rigorous selection process of the prize competition and through the cachet of being published electronically by one of the leading publishers of academic books, Columbia University Press (which is an important partner in the program).

A number of the themes of this study come out here including the principle of the legitimisation of the medium which will be discussed further in the section on barriers below (6.7).

The other aspect of the project worth dwelling on is the use of the electronic medium to enhance what is possible in print. Columbia are using the expertise developed in working on Columbia International Affairs Online **(45)**, and other projects already mentioned, to help authors to realise the potential of what can be done electronically. Multimedia additions and the provision of links are specifically mentioned but there is more profound possibility for some of significant shifts in the way the research is presented, for example in the use of multiple narratives and a shift in the balance of narrative and analysis.

There is little doubt in my mind that this project may show something new that is valuable to scholarship but it does not (to my mind) have much immediate impact on the problems, which are the theme of this study. It certainly does indicate that e-monographs take time and expertise to create and cost a lot and need a grant to accomplish.

5.5   ACLS History e-Book project

This is the other big project in history **(46)**. There is another large grant from the Mellon Foundation.

The project will last five years. The aim is to convert to electronic format 500 backlist monographs of major importance to historical studies and to publish 85 completely new electronic monographs that use new technologies to communicate the results of scholarship in new ways. It is thus a combination (rather interesting) of digitisation and born-electronic.

As one can see it much more complex project than the one previously described involving as it does under the umbrella of ACLS (the American Council of Learned Societies) ten university presses, five learned societies and a small commercial house which is acting as the organising partner. There are ambitious plans for the making available of the product. The History e-Book Library will be available on subscription. The University of Michigan Digital Library Production Service (DLPS) is the chosen distributor. There are merits seen in aggregation. But there are also plans to work with individual downloadable e-books and Open eBooks. This policy is explained as follows:

> One of the essential components of any e-book publishing program is its ability to keep up with constantly changing technology and evolving reader taste, preference and expectation. The (project) therefore anticipates an evolving selection of user interfaces that will keep abreast of such a change. Working with DLPS, the Project has decided to employ a type of master file for its web site that will allow easy and constantly updatable translation into a variety of possible formats .

This all looks very reasonable and it is too soon to make serious criticisms: one learns in publishing as one goes along. However the master file as described has yet to be invented   see below.

The emphasis on critical mass (made elsewhere) is laudable. It looks as if the subscription service has taken into account what has been learnt from the serials environment about user and library preferences.

Scholars not directly involved in the project have suggested to me that:

❑   It is slow getting of the ground.
❑   That this is a pity because the senior project should be ahead of the junior one
❑   That there are problems getting authors to do what the project wants (add value)
❑   That there are arguments about the backlist, about the establishment of the canon.

It is very difficult to understand the business plan. What will the contributing presses gain from the exercise apart from experience and will it die when the funding dries up?

However it is worth quoting the five major goals of the project because they are important for all engaged in or contemplating starting the sort of enterprises described in this study:

1) To foster broader acceptance by the scholarly community of electronic monograph-length texts as valid scholarly publication by creating electronic texts of high quality in the discipline of history;
2) To promote collaboration among ACLS, its constituent societies, university presses, scholars and libraries in electronic publishing;
3) To develop publishing processes that will help streamline production and make the creation and dissemination of scholarly electronic texts more cost-effective;
4) To help create a centralized, non-commercial (sic), electronic publication space;
5) To establish the viability of publishing specialized scholarly texts in electronic format.

It is a pity that the fourth aim panders to the current obsessions of US librarians. One wonders how the Mellon family made the money, which created the funds now distributed by the Foundation.

5.6   What might a publisher learn?

I did ask a group of questions about the enterprises described above in my questionnaire. My record of their responses is as follows and as I have mentioned elsewhere I received general lack of interest in the demonstrator projects :

Section 17 of the questionnaire contained questions concerning experience, both direct and of the models mentioned above. As I have mentioned earlier, none of the people I spoke to or questioned had any serious experience of publishing electronic monographs.

None of the British publishers who filled in the questionnaire had any opinions of the projects listed and none of those spoken to held positive views about them. They were just not thought relevant. There were however two interesting comments from university presses in the USA:

Publisher One: These are very useful initiatives at this early stage of the revolution. What matters is doing something, not waiting for others to do it for you.

Publisher Two: The Oxford University Press Online Books Project helped us understand the value of aggregating large amount of content in one place

Nevertheless it is my firm belief that publishers can gain a lot by keeping close tabs on what is going on at the AHA and the ACLS and at Columbia. It would also help them and the Foundation if they could be involved more in its thinking especially if the Foundation intends an exit strategy for its projects, as I believe it does.

The great thing about these projects is that other people are doing the trials and other people are spending money and reports on what happens are being posted.

The biggest impact, which will have implications not just for publishers but all other parts of the information chain, is likely to be that these high profile exercises create legitimacy for electronic books. It is not like Rocket Books or their relatives.

There are more general questions, which I shall leave to the last section.

6.   ELECTRONIC SOLUTIONS: THOUGHT AND SOMETIMES ACTION

Solutions have to be sought. I have described above the universal recognition of a crisis in print publishing of monographs. The basic dilemma is that publishing monographs is essential to scholarly communication in the view of most (at least for the moment) whereas at the same time it is impossible to make any money out of these publications. Although it could be argued that there are still ways in which costs can be cut, the savings resulting will probably not sufficient to change the basic picture and even higher pricing combined with even lower print runs is not easy to justify on economic grounds never mind scholarly ones.

There is a significant literature of an evangelistic character arguing that the production of monographs in electronic form cuts the Gordian knot of unprofitabilty. I want to look closely at the claims and then look at the plans of publishers, first from the point of view of policy and then (in the next section) in more detail as policies impact on the production and delivery processes.

6.1   The electronic gospel

I have already quoted from the introductory talk by Kate Torrey at the important conference on the monograph crisis held in 1997. It is interesting that the Chronicle heading covering its description of the event was *Academic Presses Look to the Internet to Save Scholarly Monographs* **(47)**. The author Karen J. Winkler appends to the article a list of experiments with electronic monographs. The shortness of the list and the word experiments is indicative of the situation as it was then and is (to a large extent) now. Since the launch of the World Wide Web there have been a barrage of articles explaining how going online will transform information flow and even scholarly communication   but there have been few examples of actual practice

My impression however is that there has not been an exponential growth in interest in the electronic solution: it has rather been either a linear growth or perhaps even no growth at all.

There has certainly been a loss of confidence about the cheapness of the solution. As often the world of serials provides an excellent indicator of change of understanding as

practical issues come to the fore. It is instructive to compare the proceedings of the Oxford workshop of 1998 on *Economics, real costs and benefits of electronic publishing in science – a technical study* **(48)** with the UNESCO/ICSU conference held two years earlier **(49)**. ICSU is the International Council of Science.

There are evangelists however and their call can be a compelling one. In particular most of the story is to be found in the excellent piece of journalism by Robert Baldock of Yale University Press, which I have already quoted from **(50)**. I intend to quote more. He sets out his stall clearly and concisely:

> There is a solution, and it is electronic. Just as the Internet bookstore makes books available to the largest possible market, the web can make monographs available to the smallest. Technology has instigated a revolution in relation to the printed book which will not only change the ways books are written, bought and read, but will change the way scholarly achievement is evaluated.

Many key themes are already present. He continues:

> Books are in fact costly, bulky, complicated to produce, expensive to distribute and accessible to a relatively small proportion of the world s population. The delivery of a script to a publisher launches an enormously complicated and time-consuming procedure of editing, design, printing, binding, storage, marketing and distribution. In an age in which a scholarly author can write a chapter and sent it instantly, and at virtually zero cost, as an email attachment to unlimited colleagues across the world, the technology of the conventional book looks primitive, inefficient and environmentally greedy.

How is this prescription being treated?

The rest of this section will be concerned with the policies they are implementing in general and in practice to achieve the goal presented   if they are.

6.2   The development of policies in publishing houses

My aim in starting work on this study was to build up a scenario for librarians and others based on publisher policies. With that end in view a substantial part of my interviewing work and the content of my questionnaire was designed to elucidate the nature of the policies being developed by publishers confronted with the sort of electronic opportunities indicated above and in the previous section.

I have been fortunate in being allowed to see (in 2000) two plans of campaign and also been given two sets of answers from responsible people to the questions:

> *"What was your strategy in establishing a strategy on how to deal with electronic books? How did you go about getting the information needed to make decisions?"*

One of the documents (plan 1) mentioned first laid out the questions to be asked as follows:

- ❏ *How big is the market?*
- ❏ *How big will it be in three years time?*

The answers were very small and impossible to say respectively. Perhaps I should have put this question into my list but I asked for sales projections rather than size of market. The questions to be answered continued:

- ❏ *Are e-books more profitable than p-books?*
- ❏ *Which kinds of books are suitable for e-book schemes?*
- ❏ *How are publishers handling copyright issues?*
- ❏ *Will we need to store digital files of our books in a different way to cater for the developing e-book market?*

The answers were not all relevant. The publisher does not publish monographs in my definition. However some of the points made will be taken up below.

The other document (plan 2) ended:

> None of my contacts think that things are going to stay exactly as they are. All think that changes of some sort are brewing; and that the web is going to be more important. Some think that there are going to be major opportunities for publishers to develop new models and new-style business, and thereby make a killing: others including myself, feel that things will change not just for publishers, but that there is unlikely to be a killing to be made

One has to add to that certainly not for the monograph publisher. I shall also quote from plan 2 again.

The two replies were from publishers in a business development function working for presses with extensive monograph programmes.

> I quote now from what I shall call Plan 3.

> We talked to everyone other publishers, vendors, etc., and then separated the wheat from the chaff. There is a tremendous amount of misinformation floating around, and it often takes nothing more than a little common sense to figure one from the latter. We involved people in the company, not so much in the decision making processes as in the process of distilling information. Obviously a program of this size will have some effect on every department from the warehouse through production. Do you know the expression from Voltaire? The best is the enemy of the good. Once we had gathered what information we had, we moved ahead knowing that we would make mistakes and knowing too that what is right now may be wrong in three months. In other words we did not look so much for the right answer as for the answer that would best suit our business right now.

This publisher has acted but to describe the programme decided on would possibly breach confidentiality.

The second of the replies (plan 4) produced a list of how they went about it. I shall summarise:

❑ They were struck with the avid interest of the new e-aggregators in the electronic monograph as a viable entity, once coupled with a powerful search, retrieve and display web-site.
❑ They looked at online journals. Could the same approach be used? Could access to monographs and journals be put together? I would call this the community approach, which informed much of the thinking behind Columbia Online project (see section 5.1) but was not raised by many publishers I spoke to.
❑ Talked to librarians and academics about what they wanted from e-monographs. They were struck by the comparison of the enthusiasm of the librarians compared with the generally lukewarm view of the academics. As we shall see in section 7 librarians are probably not as enthusiastic in practice as they were once in principle for anything electronic.
❑ Formulated ideas for an e-monograph strategy and talked to even more librarians
❑ Looked closely at what librarians were doing themselves. An example might be the Penn State/OUP project which I have not described but involves the making available a corpus of OUP monographs in history in digitised form.
❑ Talked to as many potential suppliers as possible   not just the e-specialists.

The writer of plan 4 is now (2001) working on costs and options.

The way I prepared my questionnaire did not result in policies so much as plans but I am listing some articulated ones here and also some others drawn from e-mail responses rather than the replies to the full document:

I am spreading out the replies because each represents a strategy

A is producing e-monographs through a demonstrator project but this is only for a small part of the history list and is not a big risk. (A) thinks that it may enable them to publish monographs not otherwise publishable. They are currently working with front list only. The value lies in lower costs and the enhancements possible.

B is very much a print publisher with electronic as an add-on and their concern is with cannibalism, the loss of income from sales in print to be replaced by lower income from the same purchaser from a lower priced electronic product. Currently they are doing electronic monographs from their backlist only in order   to extract extra value from dying titles   and they have currently no intention of providing e-only. They are experimenting through various channels and at moment do not know whether an e-approach will enable more monographs to be published or even maintain level. Competition will come about if new value added services offered   not from authors posting directly on non-publisher sites.

C is putting now 14 backlist online free to test the MIT, NYU and National Academy Press approach. This is defined as putting books online free of charge as a service to scholarship but in the hope of also getting more paper sales. National Academy Press is much quoted. Their electronic files are indeed made available free but can only be accessed/printed out one page at a time **(51)**. Later in 2001 C is ready to put 12 books out in e-form concurrent with hard copy publication but not sure whether free or through e-channels. Thinks e-only will come eventually

D is putting books in electronic form at much the same price and without print versions (but in PDF) monographs which would otherwise be impossible to publish. They are also repurposing some other books i.e. making chapters available.

E expects to do e-only in future as well as all their list in both formats. **E** considers that e-form will enable more monographs to be published than otherwise possible and also those that would be too specialised in print. **E** writes:

> We shall seek to digitise our entire list and hold the product for publication in whatever format the market can sustain   electronic or print (conventional or POD). It seems likely intellectual product will move from one format to another according to demand.
> The addition of editorial value is identical. The difference is format and distribution.

For **E** electronic publishing is a way to cheaper and more efficient distribution.

F is digitising 500 titles from the backlist (I assume). They should be on sale very soon. They do not expect significant revenue for a long time but they want to iron out the wrinkles. The savings will only come when e-only is acceptable.

The opinions were almost equally divided as to whether publishing in electronic only form would enable some monographs to be published that could not be published in print. Practically there was in fact little actually being done in electronic-only form. **D** quoted above was unusual in putting a whole series into electronic only form.

Rather oddly in the above examples of policies there is almost no reference to partners. The basic strategy of most when one actually looks at what is being done, but not usually articulated in this way, was to try out small schemes with partners. One senior publisher with a serious knowledge of electronic matters described this strategy (adopted by his own house) as kissing frogs . We shall look below to find some princes.

I did try later in my questionnaire to extract some information about financial planning. There is some redundancy here. The first two questions referred to the perception by publishers of the business models of their partners. There was the customary suggestion that the models were comprehensible but that they change all the time . One UK university press was positive:

> They are largely involved in selling our content online with little risk to us and a real opportunity for us to rejuvenate our backlist.

The emphasis on backlist is common to most publishers.

Do these partners constitute a threat? Most respondent felt that they did not. One US university press did feel threatened because in some cases they seem to be attempting to take over the role of scholarly publishers . For someone from a journal background the divergence of view and the varied sense of threat were very similar to the views of the spectrum of publishers on such intermediaries/aggregators as ingenta.

I also asked about costs. I did not ask respondents to take into account infrastructure, but, as I dealt with hosting etc in the next set of questions, I suspect however that most respondents referred to production costs only. The perception was that producing an e-monograph was currently more expensive than producing a print monograph but it was likely to come down.

I did give a steer in a rubric for the second question on two versions (Q97):

> "*I am assuming an extra cost because of the cost of (making electronic) files will be on top of printing and distribution but so much depends on the file formats that you are using and who is doing the conversion/digitisation.*"

A small publisher, who seemed to have done some research, reckoned that to produce both a print and an electronic version was about 125% of the costs of producing a print version only. This particular assessment was very like the usual costs that relate to publishing a learned journal in two versions   though have come down more recently.

Only one publisher contacted was really confident about lower costs for electronic monographs compared with print   It depends on how many we do; less now and very much less in the future . This was a perception that admits further analysis.

In Question 98 I raised what to me is an important issue:

> *Have you costed the (additional) costs of holding files on a server and making them accessible (management) and what were your conclusions*".

There are actually two questions there, which I should have unpicked as one related to archiving and the other to e-commerce. I have unpicked them in a later section. The short answer was that these costs had not been analysed by any of those monograph publishers with whom I interacted though most were thinking of analysing them. I have referred to the apparent lack of expertise in this area at the start of section 5.

I also asked a very clumsy question (Q99) which should have been illustrated with a simple graph drawn from the journals experience. Electronic versions become cheaper if you have more people (how more?) subscribing to them than are asking for print to be delivered. There is a point where the lines intersect. Costs in preparing online monographs and printing and distributing print monographs allow for a similar model though the discounts given to agents, bookstores etc. or electronic partners have a heavy weighting too. I did suggest inventory and returns as factors to take into account.

The nature of the replies received did not indicate to me that there had been serious modelling done by the publishers responding.

There is a lot of debate on pricing of electronic books, particularly trade books. Should an electronic monograph be priced lower than a print version? The general view was an agnostic one. There was a tendency to think in terms of cost plus pricing with the recognition that the decision was likely to be market driven . There was a particular interesting response from a large publisher with a list primarily in the social sciences:

> Electronic products should cost more (value added to end-user) unless competitive behaviour by others requires is to undervalue our electronic products .

These were very much the sentiments of publishers who put journals online in the middle 1990s. A surcharge of as high as 50% was asked in some cases for the print plus electronic bundle: this strategy was very much in line with management thinking drawing from the experience of B2B publishing. The market for scholarly journals is as tight as the market for monographs and quite soon high surcharges are likely to become untenable.

This question was associated with another that attempted to probe a scenario put to me in different ways by several publishers. It goes like this. There are two parts to the scenario. The publisher produces an electronic monograph rather than a print monograph. Most of the fixed costs represented for this purpose mainly by the editorial role are much the same. The publisher is pressed by market expectation to price the electronic monograph lower than the print monograph would have been. Sales are lower because not everyone can handle electronic monographs. The publisher gets less revenue and does not cover your fixed costs. The result is ruin.

The second part of the scenario is that the publisher produces the monograph in both print and electronic forms. This costs more and so you have an extra burden. Let us assume that half the print version is sold to those who can handle it (at a lower return per unit) and that the print version is sold to the other half of an inelastic market, which is much the same as it would be for print only. You have higher costs but lower returns. The result is ruin.

This is a pessimistic position, put to me in various ways by a number of those I spoke to.

Question 101 looked at these scenarios tangentially:

> *Do you see the revenue from (electronic) sales as additional to the revenue from print monographs or (as) cannibalising the revenue you would have got from print?"*

The responses were surprisingly positive. There was general agreement that producing an electronic version represented an additional source of revenue. The return from the questionnaires did not show the fear of cannibalising revenue which is often suggested.

The experience of the National Academy Press (mentioned above) and other publishers who have put their books online without charge is often mentioned in electronic book debates. The sales of the print versions are said to have improved. I asked if any of the publishers of specialist monographs saw this as an experiment they wished to try. Most would rather put up sample chapters. One publisher wrote   I don t see electronic product as an advertisement for the conventional book but as an alternative to it.

My final question in this section was essentially open-ended (Q103) and concerned the financial consequences of going for electronic monographs. There were two nicely contrasted views:

Publisher One   We will avoid the fiscal haemorrhage that monographs currently represent.
Publisher Two   The problem of monograph publishing is really shortage in demand. There is no evidence that this will change.

6.3   Business plans: working with partners

I have inserted below the commentary I provided in my set of questions about the way publishers work with partners. I have already quoted in the section above some perceptions about their business models and whether or not they represented a threat. The question proved too complicated for many:

> *"There are a range of companies out there who want to work with publishers who wish to put content into electronic format and sell it. You can either use such a company for preparing electronic files, for hosting the files and/or for selling the files (or part of them). You may be handling some of these roles yourself or indeed all of them and I shall ask about this sort of enterprise in the next section. In this section I shall ask about your general relationships with partners either current or prospective and tease out the details in the later sections. I am breaking out the roles that may well be represented by the same partner. If you want to ignore the questions and just tell me what sort of deal you have with those companies you are partnering with, that would be just as helpful as a yes or no approach – indeed more so."*

This set of questions was badly presented by me with the result that the information gleaned from the answers was less helpful than it might have been.

The respondents reckoned that the only way forward in the present situation was to work with partners whatever their long-term hopes. NetLibrary **(52)** was the partner almost invariably mentioned. This is not surprising as estimates (2000) of NetLibrary penetration including some from within the company suggest that between two-thirds and three-quarters of US university presses have signed contracts with them. There is no related estimate whether these deals include monographs particularly and how much of them are involved. There is little doubt that most publishers offered backlist

publications by preference and that NetLibrary have pitched for frontlist. Last year there appeared to be something of a standoff.

MicroSoft eBook **(53)** and Questia were also in the frame. Versaware was also mentioned with Ebrary just coming into the picture.

There are real problems making sense of the responses. In the first place the partners referred to were not all the same sort of partners offering similar services, though there has been some convergence. In the second place the responses were often related to plans for the whole programme rather than the monograph component of it.

 Questia (see below) is not really looking for monographs of an R2R variety and MicroSoft (a different sort of animal in any case) cannot handle anything but straight text - not even illustrations - at the moment (2001).

The model presented by the publishers was perceived as licensing content and doing so on a non-exclusive basis. However it was difficult to unravel a downstream strategy. For example, it was not clear how the files resulting from conversion related to what was needed to sell through the channels available.

I tried to find out whether conversion as a service was separated from the selling of the files converted. This approach puzzled some of the respondents. They were not looking for a separate conversion service, which seems odd to someone coming from a journals background where characteristically the typesetter does the conversion. The answer was given in a reply from a British commercial publisher. NetLibrary, Questia etc. do both digitization and distribution; typesetters provide digitization only.

I asked about charging. Partners who converted free are now asking for payment. I clearly caught the relationships at a time of change. The larger companies were attempting (it is not clear with what success) to avoid payment and at least one large commercial firm suspected that they were getting a preferential deal

A lot more information was gleaned from the interviews and other sources than from responses to the questionnaires but none of it was substantial enough for me to be able to lay out a series of options.

Fortunately it is not part of my remit to explain the offerings of the various potential partners in detail. The situation is rather like the one that obtains in traditional print with regard to the purchasing decisions of production directors. Only someone with day to day production responsibilities can really know which supplier is offering what sort of service, whether or not they have spare capacity, and whether they can really perform what they claim they can perform. In print the offerings are broadly understood and the gamut of what is available relatively stable. In the electronic arena not only does the basic language have to be explained but also each offering is couched in different terms and (annoyingly) changes frequently in its scope.

There is (as everyone told me) an alarming mismatch between what is claimed and what actually can be delivered. One company has a European facility, which was

supposed to have been operational months ago and still wasn t. Another partner was doing a huge conversion job for a major publisher but not a single e-book had emerged from the process. I am told that now (June 2001) both these arrangements are working out and what was promised has delivered but at the time of the questionnaire (going out from October 2001) publishers were showing a lot concern

Finally the deal with a partner is not just a matter for an electronic production director (where one exists), but for those responsible for all parts of the publishing process. Functions from editorial director to marketing director have to understand what is involved. It is interesting that the production of strategies for the electronic publishing of monographs, inside companies where such strategies are being developed, is not usually in the hands of traditional editorial or production managers but by young development people with other backgrounds who, in several cases, report directly to the chief executive officer.

There are hard lessons from journals publishing which by no means some but by no means all in book publishing are learning. Curved lines going backwards or forwards now distort a graphical portrayal of the production process, which used to show a linear progress from manuscript received to book delivered. Baldock s hope (quoted above) that all the messy business of proofing and suchlike can be swept away is unfortunately unrealistic. Electronic processing is just as messy. Some of this will come out in 6.5 below.

I do however think that I should explain what the main partners are offering and what essentially they are. Here is some sort of breakdown. It is for now (February 2001) but not necessarily for next month. What follows must come with a health warning because it is certain to be out of date, though, as far as I know, at the time of final revision (June 2001) there are no new players on stage.

1) E-libraries. These suppliers provide a library of e-books as part of a collection. There is one up and running (NetLibrary) which works with libraries and has recently given up attempts to go direct to consumers . There are two big enterprises, which are scheduled to get going in 2001 and which are both of interest to many of the publishers covered by this survey. These are Questia and Ebrary.

   I have already explained that in my view **Questia (54)** is irrelevant to monograph publishers but not to publishers of humanities textbooks. Questia is aimed at students who pay a subscription. The publicity to the market raises the spectre of the term paper . True R2R books are not of interest to those writing term papers, who want monographs that can be used as texts, a different category.

   Ebrary (the authoritative source of online research) is also aiming for the individual at the moment **(55)**. They present a corpus of content in pdf (portable document format), which can be downloaded and (if wished) printed out. This is easy to supply. There is a payment every time a download happens. They see the revenue coming from money, which would otherwise be spent on photocopying. This is additional revenue or so it is claimed. The blurb is convincing:

Ebrary protects copyrights whilst providing publishers and authors alike with a new revenue stream. In addition, by increasing the exposure to copyrighted material ebrary encourages the purchase of hard copy or e-book versions of titles which may be acquired through links to online and local booksellers

Revenue comes from fees/royalties. Conversion used to be free but probably is not now. Almost none of the publishers I interviewed showed much interest in eBrary, although they are said to have signed up a lot of companies. Obviously they do not produce monographs as such. There is an interesting press release on the Taylor & Francis site **(56)** showing how one large monograph publishers sees their offering.

NetLibrary is owed more space. Many publishers have told me that their only income from the sales of electronic monographs comes from this source. They are the first in the field and have had to suffer all the changes of policy confronted with reality and the dislike of many for these necessary changes. They have borne the brunt of discovering the problems of doing contracts in this new environment. Their equivalent in the serials arena is Ovid. They are still going and still going strong.

There was (as I have mentioned elsewhere) a lot of uncertainty about the plans of NetLibrary I shall explain the some of the implications of working with NetLibrary in section 6.5.

2) Hosting and distribution services

One big player is **Versaware (57)**. Again I shall quote from the Taylor & Francis web-site. They are a publisher of monographs and they have gone public with their plans. When announced (March 2nd 2000) the plan was for Versaware to create a virtual warehouse, which will be operated and run by Versaware (and which will) offer a range of services including print on demand . The projection were concrete:

> Versaware will digitise a minimum of 3,000 back list books before the end of 2000 and complete the digitisation of the remaining 14,000 titles by the middle of 2001.

New titles will be released in both e-book and print formats. Schedules have undoubtedly slipped but (as far as I know) the intention remains.

The CEO of Taylor & Francis writes:

> Digitising our book titles will allow us to develop our intellectual property to meet the changing needs of the market. This deal is consistent with our strategy of carefully monitoring new electronic developments and linking with leading technology partners, such as Versaware, to ensure that the business *well positioned* (my italics) to capitalise on the opportunities presented by electronic publishing.

What is impressive here is that there is no mismatch between strategy and action. The questionnaire analysed in *Publishing 2001* **(58)** revealed publishers confident

about the future because they knew what was going on and not because they had actually done anything.

There is a problem of classification in the sense that these two partners probably will not wish to be put into the same category but I am going to add another company here. This is **Lightning Source (59)**, which describes itself as providing digital content distribution and print services to the publishing industry. Lightning Source (LSI) is different from most of the other players in that is owned by Ingram, the big American book wholesaler, and, like its essential model is that of a wholesaler. LSI has two models, one is wholesale and one is a fulfilment service. In both cases LSI acts as a link (via a retailer) to the end-purchaser. LSI has deals with some big publishers and is well suited to working with monograph publishers.

The complication for the publisher in understanding all these partners is that they all convert (as a means to an end that is true) and they all offer print on demand. Whether they do it well is another matter but only time will tell. As we shall see below, providing content in a form which is appropriate to the range of e-tailers out there some big and some small but all primarily concerned with trade books requires a range of formats. I see no reason to do more than list those companies, which interface between the user and whoever is hosting and/or converting

Publishers are experimenting (February 2001) with dedicated reading devices such as Rocket eBook, SoftBook and Glassbook (probably now renamed) and there are others coming over the horizon. There are also non-dedicated reading devices such as PCs, Pocket PCs, Palm Pilots, and WAP phones   only partially and proleptically relevant and such as FatBrain and its relatives.

At the time of final revision (June 2001) it is clear that there is some uncertainty (to say the least) about the financial stability of some of the companies mentioned here. This must impact on the progress towards electronic monographs as part of the overall development of a viable e-book business.

6.4   Business plans: keeping control of content

I phrased my commentary on my questions in section 11 of my questionnaire as follows:

> *"A number of publishers have told me that they are very keen on keeping control over their own content and the following questions relate to situations where you may be venturing into the unknown on your own. Some of these questions are alternatives to those asked in the previous section."*

These questions were about preparing ones own files, hosting them and using them for e-commerce without the interposition of a partner. Most of the respondents saw this as for the future but it was clear in almost all cases that this was not practically considered at the present time.

The smaller presses, both those answering the questionnaire and those interviewed, were clear that working with partners on an experimental basis and without cost was one thing but the costs of going alone was prohibitive at the present time.

One larger US university press gave a very helpful response to the introductory statement recorded above.

The response was as follows:

> I very much sympathise with this view. We are at the beginning of a revolution, and it is not clear how it will pan out. Digital service providers are simply opportunistic intermediaries for publishers who have no expertise or nerve to do it themselves. My preference would be not to use them but it is difficult and expensive to find an alternative at present.

One practical result of working with partners is that they come between the publisher and many of those actually selling the book. I have not gone into the complexities of etail (electronic selling) because publishers did not. This is a very temporary situation will not last as e-monographs become part of the common experience during 2001.

In the serials environment there were, from the beginning of the provision of online availability of journals, two schools of thought among the larger publishers. One group wanted to do everything themselves and the other was keen to work with any channel to market, which might be preferred by the libraries. The debate is ongoing. The difference between monograph and journal publishing is that there is a lot more money in journals.

The policy document I have described as Plan 2 above (6.2) expressed the same situation somewhat differently:

> Although in the long term, the e-book market may settle down to one software standard, at present there is a plethora of hardware and software platforms. This creates a need for intermediaries to store, convert and deliver digital files to customers in the different formats they require. These services ensure that customers will not lose control of copyright in distribution to the end-user.

The context for these comments was digital rights management (DRM). There are a lot of companies out there selling DRM solutions but not presumably to scholarly publishers on the whole. It is interesting that in none of my discussions or in the replies I received was DRM mentioned.

6.5   Business plans: costs of production hosting and distribution strategies

The approach, which underpins this section, is that it is pointless spending much time analysing in detail those production and distribution strategies that have been devised by the publishers involved in this study. By detail in this context I am referring to the

actual calculations, to the costs and financial arrangements which publishers have with their partners and suppliers and how these arrangements relate to their pricing policies and profit expectations. It is not just a problem of the constantly shifting picture as new partners appear month by month and represent new routes to conversion or new channels for reaching market. It is also that the publishers are still in experimental mode on the whole though there are fewer in 2001 not reaching some sort of conclusion than there were in 2000.

What this does mean is that we can assume only a tiny number of publishers actually have a template they can apply to an editorial proposal for an electronic-only monograph or, even worse, one in two formats. Such a template is the point when electronic publishing becomes real, part of the regular business Think of factoring in the discounts for different types of e-tailers (electronic retailers) for whom one also has to provide a different edition and judging sales through a particular channel for which you have no form. It is (as I was told repeatedly) still too early. It was too early when I started this study and when I called previous respondents while writing up it was still too early. For reasons that I shall examine below, implementation of ideas was taking longer than expected.

Thus I shall not be providing the sort of models provided in the Columbia Online project described and criticised in an earlier section: it is too soon. Nevertheless I am going to give some generalisations about where costs are incurred and what sort of decisions have to be made.

This is a good place to explain that I am not primarily concerned with the impact of information technology on the production process within the publishing house. Armstrong and Lonsdale (see appendix 3) make a similar exclusion:

> Whilst we recognise that encoding such documents in SGML, for example, renders them easily transferable to electronic formats, this research excluded consideration of the electronic preparation of paper monographs

I shall now provide the sort of response I got from my questionnaire

This was a big section that asked too much from most of my respondents.

The first section was not a problem. I attempted to probe the views of the publishers on author attitudes to electronic publishing. The way I phrased the questions made it less than clear whether it was author attitudes I was asking about or the advantages perceived by publishers for authors/users, which is rather different.

The reason for putting this list of questions on perceived author preferences into the same frame as questions about hosting and obviously technical matters is that what the author wants or needs to make the electronic monograph useful or even preferable has a cost implication. If linking is required the costs of putting in the links has to be taken into account and if there are additional elements like video-clips there are significant additional costs, not least in hosting and delivery.

I also put in questions, which have no cost implications. I shall return to these answers below when I discuss the acceptance of electronic monographs by academic communities and libraries

All publishers were positive about the usefulness of the access to a larger number of readers made possible by electronic availability and also on the browsing/searching capabilities. One comment was that the latter seems to make sense given how users read their works but others felt searching was not so important as it is in reference publishing. Note that for many of these publishers reference publishing, as much if not more than journals was the familiar yardstick, especially because for a book publishers these have been the first products to be put online. Linking is very important in journals publishing. Monograph publishers were concerned about the problems of manually identifying the links but showed general if muted interest in the idea of linking through to other published material.

One response to this question (Q63) showed some practical thinking:

> Sounds good, but I ve no idea how it might work, or what it might cost. The potential sophistication and flexibility of the electronic publication is limitless, but how much is really necessary? It s like the average personal computer, which has vastly more potential than the average user can plausibly require.

There was a question about links through to data used in the research (the Darnton pyramid concept disguised). One publisher picked this up:

> Yes, in theory, but this is where the provision of a marginal service may prove too costly.

A question about linking through to the author s own web-site elicited a more positive response, probably because it is already happening in textbook publishing.

Most of the respondents had no particular enthusiasm for video clips and several multi-media items as envisaged and indeed being put into practice with some publisher enthusiasm in the Gutenberg-e project.

As far as reading on screen is concerned, the majority view seems to be that browse then print will be the norm for some time to come, but that it is probably a generational thing. There were two very positive views from major US university presses. One publisher wrote:

> This is the default excuse of the electronic sceptic, that reading on screen gives one a headache. The truth is that most of us work on screen all day anyway. And the quality of screens will improve. My guess is that in five years the screen will be better than the printed page (which is after all pretty primitive and fuzzy) for type, and several years later for images.

I was particularly interested in this response. On the whole the publishers were more positive about working with screens than the academics I spoke too. This could be due

to a greater experience of working with computers. They were also to some extent self-selected. I made clear in the commentary on the question that I was thinking of MicroSoft ClearType and its successors.

The next couple of questions (Q68-69) asked about hand-held devices versus laptop or personal computers. The general view was that content should be made available both routes. One interesting comment was:

> I personally think hand held devices are an interim gimmick, and that readers will use the largest and clearest screen they possess, whether it is on the wrist or in the study.

The question which prompted the respondents to specify their preferred device technology for the future from the range of much-hyped alternatives currently coming on to the market raised little interest.

I asked questions about XML or PDF. Most plumped for both. The ideal would be to hold material in an agnostic format so that it can be customised according to demand. Another term used was content agile , a concept which usefully encapsulated the ideal of a neutral file. As we shall see this sort of agility is not close to being realised. As was recognised there is also the question of cost with the figure of 125% of standard typesetting costs being mentioned.

The history of online serials is instructive here. When journals were first put on line there was an active debate between protagonists of two different technologies. PDF (portable document format) enabled the journal content to be shown online and printed out in a form identical to the printed page. PDF was relatively easy to produce from the typesetting process. The alternative was SGML/HTML. If the content was put into full text SGML the reader could search right through the document but the print out was not the same as the printed page. To start with the compromise was PDF with SGML headers so that there could be searching on the key words. Now most journal publishers produce or intend to produce their electronic files in both PDF and XML (the successor to SGML and HTML). There will be two files both with associated costs and in the case of a full-text structured file it took the serial publishing industry some years to train up the typesetting industry to deliver the document type definition (DTD) which the publisher required.

The customisation mentioned above is not trivial. As far as I know files used by NetLibrary always have to be customised by them, though this is changing (June 2001) They are rather locked into the need to continue with the complex DTD they have developed, because the functionality they offer their customers depends upon it. The conversion services are pledged to deliver at least four types of XML or XML related files. That is what it means if you go to a range of devices and outlets.

All those who felt they were in a position to answer the question about the OEB (the Open e-Book standard) were thinking about it - as well they might. Serious convergence in this area would transform the opportunities for publishers. Actually thinking is probably all that publishers can do at the present time.

I asked a question (Q73) about the format of the files being handed over to whichever company was converting into XML and specified PDF, PostScript and Quark as possibilities. Clearly most publishers had no overall policy and were working with what they could get from each typesetter rather than laying down the law. Interviews in particular showed a high level of ignorance about this area. It was not for example realised by several senior publishers that the PDF files used in the transferring the output of the typesetter (compositor) to the printer was a file at a different resolution from that used online. As I understand it most conversion houses will accept files in any standard form but once they have acquired sufficient content, I suspect they will become more demanding as well they might.

I also asked about encryption and should have added watermarking as an alternative or in addition. In my commentary on this question I mentioned encryption in the context of the preservation of authenticity rather than e-commerce but there was no interest shown. This whole area, the protection of content, was not of concern as yet for monograph publishers. As I have already mentioned I failed to ask questions about rights but they were not raised except in the sense that the failure to acquire them in the past represented a serious problem. I shall discuss this further in the section on barriers

In the third part of this section of the questionnaire I moved on to the linked questions of the monograph as part of a database and the monograph available for re-purposing (to use an over-optimistic term common in management circles) or aggregation or alternatively for slicing and dicing. I wrote:

> *"You will be aware that there have been many attempts by the larger corporates (large corporations) to set up databases of content"*

There was some (mainly future) interest in this context both from the point of delivering clusters which one publisher was actively planning to do and also selling individual chapters. Two publishers had plans to add key words and abstracts to chapters in a monograph to facilitate sale at a lower level of granularity than the whole book. I was able to follow up the question of selling chapters in subsequent interviews. My own view is that whereas articles are written as separate entities chapters are not and are not usually self-contained in a way that makes them appropriate for sale out of context. I was told that some leading scholarly publishers are not only asking authors to prepare their chapters as self-contained items but authors themselves are tending to write modules standing along rather than chapters which refer to other parts of an integrated book. I do not have any written evidence for this change in procedures.

Other (more) publishers were using chapters for advertising purposes only, as samples, as an alternative to making the whole text available online (see above).There some interest in acquiring digital object identifiers at a chapter level but I did not get the impression of immediate action. At least two of those who filled in the questionnaire were unaware of the DOI Foundation **(60)**, which demonstrates the distance of monograph publishing from the concerns of the serials world. Without some sort of

digital identifier digital commerce is not possible especially when (as for chapters) there is no existing descriptor in normal use.

I raised a broader issue of appropriate standards in my original proposal. I did not seek them or find them in my investigations, except in the sense that I raised questions relating to appropriate formats. There are debates about whether different technologies are converging or diverging but at the moment very little can be said about the immediate future.

I shall conclude this section with an attempt to bring together all the decisions which have to be made to put content online and which have cost implications. These cost implications may involve either payments to external suppliers or rejigging of internal processes. This is a partial list in both senses of the world. I shall frame the decisions needed in the form of questions to an imaginary publisher as follows:

❑ How should the production process so organised that a file suitable for some electronic use is produced as cheaply and efficiently as possible? This usually means PostScript/PDF.
❑ Who should convert these files into a format suitable for selling downstream? As we have seen this usually means several formats (tweaking is one word used and several sets of costs. The question realistically at present needs to be answered by the name of one of the partners mentioned earlier.
❑ Who is responsible for continuing to develop tweaking for future platforms?
❑ How is the content to be archived? Holding the content in storage is not the same as holding it for e-commerce. The key to successful archiving is identification rules and metadata (data about the data). I have mentioned a talk on this topic as arousing minimal interest but it is central to electronic publishing as journal publishers have found: the key issues are standardisation and specification and how you hold the content depends on how you will want to use it.
❑ Do you have to encrypt and protect content? Most monograph publishers will, I suspect, say not necessary. If people want to break into their warehouse they will and it will be too expensive to protect. However getting hold of files and not paying for them is one thing but altering or cutting up the file is another. Authors rights have to be protected.
❑ Who enhances the files with video and audio clips, tags or links? Ideally the publisher would wish the author to do most of the work as is becoming more common in the online journals environment but humanities authors are usually not sophisticated enough. In the Gutenberg-e project a lot of the time of the publisher involved is devoted to working with the authors to realise their ideas about what enhancements will add value to their monograph.
❑ Who will manage all the contracts involved? Again the experience of both serials publishers and librarians is that working with (in particular) licenses has been a new and huge burden, though one which, in some ways, has brought the sectors together in a new way. Rights managers have told me that the situation in books means starting from scratch again and particularly dealing with some much less sophisticated partners.
❑ Who will handle order processing for e-content sales? The partner surely but what if you want to sell chapters?

- Who will provide 24-hour customer support? This can be seen as a question put prematurely but think of the complexities of dealing, for example, with Darnton s pyramid. Who deals with complaints that the links are not working?
- Are you going to sell e-books direct to customers from your own site? No need to comment?
- Are you going to adopt a print on demand solution as one of your portfolio of options? Again a partner may administer print on demand, but the repercussions on the way you work are going to mean time-consuming re-organization of your whole sales process not to mention your accounting.
- How are you going to track and monitor sales and usage depending on whether you are adopting a book or a subscription model?
- How are you going to move the whole process forward? The context is change management   perhaps the big buzz word of the present in publishing circles. However change management is interpreted, its implementation will involve new staff with business development, information technology and production technology roles and salaries.

6.6   Printing on demand

My introductory comment (in the relevant section of the questionnaire) ran:

" This questionnaire is not about printing on demand but as I did my initial research I realised how closely related strategies concerning electronic publishing were to the printing on demand possibilities now available through such companies as Lightning Source."

There have been previous large-scale proposals for distributed printing from electronic delivery. As far as I can tell these are still not yet fully operational and seem to be most appropriate for textbook publishing. There has also been a lot more use by scholarly publishers of sophisticated short-run printing. What seems to me different about what Lightning Source, and more recently NetLibrary are offering is that they are offered as part of an electronic publishing strategy.

The assumption also is that the quality will be much higher than was possible in the past (see the reference to other older technologies in the article by Freitag quoted earlier in this study).

Authors are very concerned about their books going out of print. Two leading US publishers write in an article, which I shall quote again **(61)**:

> What is more ignominious than having your book   the object of years of hard labor   summarily, unequivocally and often irrevocably killed off?

Obviously librarians find the situation equally irritating especially, as we have seen, when the book is a research monograph that has almost no chance of a conventional reprint. Obviously they do have recourse to the second hand book market, which represents an alternative channel for purchase   often overlooked by publishers and the companies that serve them   but that is a second-best solution for their patrons.

The same authors quoted above went on to say:

> Perhaps the most important point to make about print-on-demand books is that they are not e-books. In fact they have nothing to do with e-books

Of those publishers who responded to my questions, most also saw print on demand (POD) as additional to e-book publishing. For a substantial group of others however it was undoubtedly an alternative strategy, one easier to start with. If they have read the article I am quoting (see the quotation at the end of this section) they may have doubts. A number of publishers are already planning to print very short to cover only those copies that go out on publication and then reprint on demand. Others are going the whole hog and see POD from PDF files as part of the overall options , which the possession of electronic files can allow.

All publishers who answered the questionnaire and others interviewed saw POD as (particularly) for the extraction of value out of the back list as well as to be considered in planning for the front list.

One final quote from the article mentioned:

> There are still bumps on the road ahead whether technical, procedural or psychological that will need to be smoothed out Making progress will require authors, editors, marketers, booksellers, sales representatives and printers to educate themselves about the promises and ramifications of this approach to printing and publishing. For publishers, adapting to print-on-demand books will, in the short term, be more onerous than for most other players in the book industry, since it will require a wholesale overhaul of many basic publishing procedures, formulas and assumptions.

6.7   Is there anything to stop publishers taking the plunge?

Almost no publishers were hostile to electronic monographs per se. There were some, who hesitated about when to take the plunge. One major press went public quite recently about their decision to hold off publishing their monographs in electronic form for the moment but I happened to know (when the body of this text was written) that they were making available several hundred volumes from their back-list within a few weeks. There is a sense in which the rush to try out the partnerships on offer is impossible to resist. Certainly few have.

I think it is reasonable to suggest on the basis of the evidence presented so far that for the moment for most companies questions of additional and replacement revenue and re-organising to adapt to the electronic future are questions which can be put off in the main. You can avoid a strategy and let others work out whether monograph publishing can be transformed along the lines some envisage. Time will tell.

There are some minor problems about such partnerships. It is pretty clear to me that the more cautious publishers want to arrange the digitisation of their backlist first. Not

much harm can be done to a dying book and any income is additional income. However it is also clear to me that the partners want the front list because the demand downstream is for the front list. It is not clear that putting the toe in the water (an analogy frequently used) does actually give a result which is relevant to making a strategic decision about re-organising the whole publishing programme.

Those who have been willing to give me insight into the inner workings of a number of leading publishers have been unanimous in picking out two practical barriers in particular to a thoroughgoing approach to electronic publishing. These problems relate to production and rights.

I want to touch on production first. It is somewhat of surprise. As I have mentioned elsewhere in the early days of online journals making electronic files of any sort was difficult but now the typesetters are trained to deliver. But they are different typesetters. Typesetters (compositors) who handle bookwork, particularly when margins are tight as they are bound to be, are a different bunch from journal typesetters. The book production director characteristically uses a lot of different companies, often small and not always stable and often in very exotic parts of the world. It is bit of a caricature of the situation to suggest that the main requirement for a book production supremo is to screw the prices down. Journals are a different picture. The demand there is for stable relationships, accuracy, flexibility and good schedules. Business development directors or other executives pursuing an electronic publishing agenda have found out that it is very difficult to get from the typesetters used in book publishing electronic files of the quality and reliability needed.

The problems over rights are not unexpected. Again the experience of journal publishers was that they did not hold all the rights (world electronic rights in all formats for all their content) they needed for downstream licensing. They do now. Rights managers tell me that getting hold of the rights needed to digitise a backlist has been a huge task, which is ongoing. You can overlook a lost or inadequate transfer of rights for an odd article here or there but each book represents a unique problem. There are also probably problems adapting contracts so that income from electronic sources is treated as primary rather than secondary income, though this was not mentioned in this context. Of course new procedures can solve both these problems, but for the moment the plans of at least one large publisher have been significantly delayed.

7.   THE ACCEPTANCE OF ELECTRONIC MONOGRAPHS

In this penultimate section I want examine the acceptance of electronic monographs within the academic community, among librarians and within the information chain as a whole. I am particularly interested in exploring the barriers to acceptance of electronic monographs, and in particular electronic-only monographs

7.1 Acceptance by scholars

Although there has been a survey of what journal contributors want **(62)**, nothing similar is available to find out what monograph authors are looking for   though the AAUP study is under way.

I have already recorded the perceptions of publishers surveyed about the usefulness to their author/readers of some features available in an electronic monograph. The context was business planning. I have argued earlier that publishers are in touch with authors and it was also confirmed by a number of publishers that they had canvassed their authors on policies relating to e-books in order to gain their reaction. The purpose of the questions in section 14 of my questionnaire was to find out more of what feedback there had been to supplement what I derived from conversations with academics and those representing them**.**

There was a significant divergence in the replies, for example to the first question *"Have any of your authors pressed you to put their monographs into an electronic format?"* A great deal seemed to depend on the enthusiasm for electronic publishing by the publisher involved so I think one can assume that positive responses from authors to positive enquiries is what we are seeing here rather than unprompted encouragement to go the electronic route. An answer to my question 85 rang true   No, they worry that the RAI will ignore them . This is research assessment US-style. The Research Assessment Exercise in the UK carries the same sort of message, though all the evidence is that the RAE treats electronic publications equally with print as far as the medium is concerned.

I have cited elsewhere the plans of one publisher who does intend to offer electronic only monographs in a very specialist area. The answer to a question   Obviously you are hoping to get the support of your authors   have you sounded them out?   was the uncompromising   They are horrified of course! But we are one of the very few options for people in this field, so I think everyone will eventually acknowledge the need for a compromise.

Some publishers have done some market research and found a lack of enthusiasm for electronic monographs from academics as users/readers that can be compared with the perceptions of librarians as examined in the next sub-section. One experienced US publisher wrote   The impulse for electronic publishing comes from the publisher .

In this same section I also asked about structured files. I am interested in what might be described as asking authors to do more. There is nothing new in this approach in specialised book publishing. As we have seen, the request for camera-ready copy has a long history. In the electronic journal environment it seems clear that if an electronic journal can be truly cheaper to produce, the process has to start with authors producing a structured file **(63)**.

I was surprised that none of those who answered this question actually had a structured template for authors in place, though most were considering one. It would be interesting to know what sort of response the rather detailed instructions provided for authors in the ACLS project (see above in section 5) has received from participants. I

have not been able to confirm a rumour that it has not been entirely positive. This is probably one of those areas where there are (still) bumps on the road ahead.

Corporate owners of large commercial houses have for many years pressed their troops in the frontline to make contact with their final purchasers or end-users and ideally cut out the middleman. This is one of the disintermediary pressures. I did therefore ask if electronic publishing of monographs might enable more direct contact with the user/reader but responses were mostly either negative or probably puzzled.

On the other hand another rather vague conceptual question asking publishers if they were aware *of any body of opinion in the scholarly community that sees electronic monographs as a way forward in making scholarship more accessible* did get a definitely positive response. Even if authors are not pressing publishers some more nebulous construct is   to my mind a perception that is accurate (see section 5 passim).

Let us take it that authors are positive or at least agnostic and that they are very concerned about the monograph crisis. What are the barriers to embracing electronic publishing with enthusiasm?

There is an article describing the AHA initiative by James William Brodman **(64)**. He writes in early 2000:

> Our enthusiasm should, however, be restrained, as we attempt to solve a number of real problems associated with the electronic publication of academic materials. The first of these is legitimacy   The simple truth is that university faculty who sit on hiring, promotion and tenure committees do not yet consider digital text the equal of printed text.

Brodman goes on to blame the uneven character of what students unearth in cyberspace and the the intellectual wild west that knows no peer review

His view is that the way of overcoming this prejudice is to limit electronic monographs to reprints i.e. the digitisation of the backlist, which fits in nicely with the preferences of conservative publishers   as we have seen.

The second problem or barrier he identifies is the problem of tracking digital content. This is the role of the Digital Object Identifier, already mentioned but clearly not known to Brodman. The big implementation so far of the DOI is the CrossRef project, which deals with the linking of references in journal articles to the articles referred to. There is no reason why books or chapters of books cannot be incorporated into the scheme, though there is of course a cost element

A third problem is instability of content . Brodman appears to be commenting on the difficulty in locating the document rather than distortion of the document. The Digital Object Identifier is designed to keep tabs on content but the problem of the protection of integrity (my fear not his) is more difficult to solve.

The fourth problem is money, cost and profit. His concern is that of much of this study. He asks the question not posed in section 1.5:

> Would academic integrity be better served by nonprofit or for-profit suppliers? As in health care, this is and will remain an important question.

The final problem has been examined during this study:

> Will people actually read e-books and, if so, in what way?

I have recorded various answers to that question. If we look at the wider e-book context some of the hype of Microsoft is very compelling. But most academics interviewed were dubious about extended reading on screen   still. We do not know.

It has been suggested that authors of monographs will avoid publishers entirely and put their material directly on the web. Looking at the question from a different standpoint, some publishers considered that electronic monographs will encourage a lot of material to be published that should not have seen the light of day. There is a report in the Chronicle of Higher Education **(65)** about a certain Professor Brians of Washington State University. He is quoted:

> I have always been dissatisfied with the way that academic publishing takes place. You have to wait for so long and go through this vetting process. I just fling the stuff out there and let people tell me whether they find it useful or not. I also love the idea of being able to change things. If you say something erroneous or stupid, people will tell you pretty quickly.

What is surprising is not these sentiments, which are very similar both to those of Stefan Harnad and other apostles of the open e-print solution to all the problems of serials and at lower level to those expressed on numerous e-Book fan sites. It is the fact that they are not held by more scholars in the humanities. They are not.

I did not put in a question about archiving of electronic content and very few mentioned it as a problem. Many protagonists of electronic-only journals see the lack of a clear solution (as yet) to the problems of archiving in perpetuity non-print materials a serious barrier to the acceptance of their journals. I think that this is another area where scholars in the humanities are behind the times and my strong suspicion is that by the time they have caught up the problem will be solved. In the UK for example there will be legal deposit of non-print materials within the next five years. The technology is almost there and it only the financing that is required.

Finally I took some soundings from librarians on the question of author preferences (see appendix 2).

First I tried to get a view from librarians on the perceived enthusiasm or lack of it being shown or likely to be shown by their users/patrons. There was an interesting range of comments with most of the view that printing out would continue. However it was pointed out that printing out a whole book was not like printing out a journal article. It is

a much bigger job. It is interesting that librarians recognised that electronic delivery for printing does not look as good a deal for 250 pages as it does for 30 pages.

Secondly there was a wish to cater for the differences in electronic capability. It was agreed by all that some were reluctant in their embrace of the new technologies and some found it easy. The assumption that the latter group would grow, but there was a strongly held view that libraries should continue to serve those who worked with print.

I did attempt to seek the insights of librarians into the willingness of their patrons as authors to entrust their books to electronic only publication. Most could not help.

One American librarian with rather more experience echoed lots of the publishers:

> As authors I think my patrons will generally avoid electronic-only book publication, both because it is risky in terms of copyright protection and because it is a low prestige way to publish. At this point in the development of the marketplace, I cannot imagine anyone going to the trouble to write a book without the reasonable prospect of print publication.

7.2 Acceptance in libraries

As I explained at the beginning of this study, I had intended to present a range of scenarios to a wide range of scholarly librarians but contented myself with a small questionnaire directed at two groups.

One group was senior US librarians with an interest in this topic known to me or reached through friends. The second group was a combination of library directors and acquisition librarians, the former reached through university web-sites and the latter from the National Acquisitions Group List. I asked about 40 people and got a thirty per cent response.

I have already recorded the answers to the questions about author/reader responses as perceived by the librarians.

I asked the following further questions and got the following responses.

My first question related to the circumstances, in which libraries would purchase electronic monographs in preference or as well as print.

There was a reluctance to answer this question in the way I had asked. Where librarians on both sides of the Atlantic did tick an option it was as well as print if the additional cost was minimal in the great majority of cases. However the following sentiment was repeated several times in different ways:

> We haven t developed criteria yet, but I feel safe in saying that our decision would not be made with reference to pricing structure. Rather we will be looking

at the end user group for whom this format would be most useful, or considering subject matter as a factor.

Two British librarians felt that they were not yet ready to make any sort of decision and indeed did not yet have the infrastructure in place in their universities. Decisions over journals had been necessary but the pressure over books was not yet evident.

One comment is worth recording at length:

> At this point in the development of e-book technology, e-books are still a terrible way to read; they are however a wonderful way to do research. As things stand right now, if every way we bought a print book we were offered an e-book edition as well at minimal price (the decision would be made on an ad hoc basis)   I can however foresee a future, in which we would buy the e-book as well as a matter of course, if the reader technology continues to mature (which it will) and if our experiments in e-books are embraced by our patrons

A second question related to the preferred format for accessing e-books. There is some experience in US academic libraries of trying out dedicated devises on the student population, which has not produced clear-cut results **(66)**. The general view was as follows:

There was a real suspicion of content only available in a format appropriate for a single class of proprietary device, a suspicion that has grown stronger and has recently been given magisterial treatment by Clifford Lynch   though not with special reference to monographs **(67)**. Not everyone was convinced that the distinctions I had made in the questionnaire was a valid one and the case of portable computers with wireless LAN connections cited. Where a preference was made it was for online. One American librarian wrote:

> E-book reader standards are still up in the air and it is not clear which hardware will become the e-book equivalent of Windows.

A third question asked if their library could handle the technology.

Even where they worried about their infrastructure librarians felt able to handle e-books. It is interesting how much more technologically aware acquisition librarians have become since the early days of online versions when many were frankly terrified

I also asked about experience, which was limited. It was mostly with NetLibrary collections, which most did not like. In particular they did not like the nature of the basic deal, which separated out the NetLibrary collection from the rest of the library holdings, or its model of one user at a time. One librarian, making a general comment, made the following downbeat observation:

> Granted, this is a new product in a new marketplace, but it seems as if some extremely basic functions are being overlooked in the mad rush to market. I

think these are problems that will resolve themselves as time goes on. But for now the promise of ebooks remains largely unrealized.

There was similar feedback from others spoken to.

Finally I was offered a free flow comment. It is worth recording:

> The market for the electronic book is volatile and uncertain. Many companies and institutions are plunging into a market, which they do not fully grasp. The issues of author s rights, pricing, retention and archival issues as well as many others make for an overall product that is, at this time, not a responsible investment. In addition members of our profession have carved a niche for themselves as heralds for this new technology further complicating the issue. The concept of electronic packaging and distribution of information as a monograph is an acceptable one that needs careful study on the part of the professional consumer.

I do not think these responses tell us a lot. None of the respondents tangled with the specific purpose of the study though a short preamble to the questionnaire explained its aims.

However they do show is that the library community is now fully confident in the electronic arena. I would characterise the responses as relaxed. There is a general presumption in favour of electronic developments but it is not shrill and wishes to exploit new technology is balanced by concern for the author community.

One point did not come out in the replies to the short questionnaire but it is one, which is often made in the library literature. There is considerable distress and anger at the way in which library budgets are swallowed up by serial purchases, especially STM journals from commercial publishers. This is a visceral feeling as well as one based on rational analysis. Most librarians are book people and some are scholars. Serial librarians are usually technical people of relatively low status   not always I hasten to add. I will be surprised if there are not more library initiatives attempting to shore up the monograph in the near future. There is certainly a move by librarians to take over university presses e.g. Stanford **(68)** or start new digital presses e.g. Firenze **(69)**. How to handle e-monographs will be high on their agendas but the problems will not be different from those we have discussed.

7.3 Impact on the information chain.

My assumption (already stated) is that the main players in the information chain will remain in position in an electronic environment. I have commented on the views of publishers and librarians earlier. It seems to me that there is good evidence that that there is enough value added by those intermediary functions, exercised by publishers and libraries for them to continue. I shall speculate a little in the final section about some re-arrangement of these central roles.

I have written almost nothing about bookselling in the electronic environment. It is easy to forget booksellers as stakeholders in future arrangements relating to electronic books and they do hardly figure in the responses I received. However as we move into questions of actual supply, booksellers begin to respond, or so anecdotal evidence (personal communications) tell me. My research has not probed this area.

It is interesting that a leading conversion house is actually owned by a wholesaler. I am told from within the organisation that it is working according to the financial model of a wholesaler   low margin but lots of traffic.

The evidence from serial publishing is that traditional intermediaries have found a new role as aggregators and have been joined by other players with different original mind-sets. The section on partners (6.3) suggests that a lot of regrouping is likely as a number of new players find margins different to sustain, or, perhaps one should say, their investors do not give them time. New players in the serial environment were given more time. Some, for example Ovid, have done well and completed their exit strategy **(70).**

Although one large player in journal publishing has contracts with as many as 23 intermediaries exploiting their rights downstream, there has nevertheless been a general tendency to fewer big players in intermediary areas in serials, which seems to already be happening in the book business. One leading commentator sees as a feature of the electronic environment **(71).**

I think there is a lot of scope mapping the different ways in which those involved in electronic monograph publishing will interact in the future. There are some nice flow charts provided by Lightning Source **(72),** but obviously they are envisaging a structure that maximises their role. Lugg and Fischer provide another map   see A3.3 note 2.

D: WHAT CAN WE SAY?

The short answer to this question is that it is too soon to draw even many sort term conclusions about how the publication of monographs in the humanities will develop. Throughout this study I have made various judgements on little evidence and have quoted similar judgements

8   CONCLUSIONS AND PROJECTIONS

There is a lot of evidence in this study but not a lot of firm conclusions. I think this accurately reflects the present posture of the publishing community but there could be a lot more clarity available. I think this will come as the realities begin to impinge as a result of experience. I have spent some time showing how the publication of monographs relates to scholarly communication in the humanities but I have not examined in any depth the way that e-books work or may work. This is mainly because the technologies are as yet so poorly developed. That is however another part of the

context for the various assumptions paraded here. If e-books are taken up seriously in the trade sector channels will be developed, which could be used for the sale of monographs   piggy backing as it were. The odd thing is that trade publishers see less scope currently for electronic publishing that academic publishers **(73)**, although the oddness is less pronounced when one considers the different ways in which novels and academic monographs are accessed by the reader

In what follows I have not provided any sort of summary guide to publishing monographs in e-form. The various lists provided in some of the previous sections are as far as I feel able to go into practicalities. My thoughts are essentially blue sky and I have produced no time predictions. All the predictions in the serial environment have been seriously wrong as far as timing has been concerned even when not wrong in substance.

My conclusions are as follows:

- There is a crisis in monograph publishing in print and it will worsen. That is clear from the projections by the publishers. I cannot see more funding for books becoming available as part of library budgets. This is the central problem. I can see a lot fewer monographs being published and I suspect young scholars will soon characteristically draw some articles from their dissertations and rely on what is now easy access to the thesis itself. I may be underestimating either the conservatism of the academic or alternatively the real needs of scholarly discourse   or both. It is possible that, as the larger presses withdraw from publishing more than a token number of monographs in the humanities, smaller presses will take advantage of lower overheads and probably more efficient working with the academic community to fill the gap. But this will be only a partial replacement and margins will be very low.
- I think there will be more electronic-only monographs as delivery channels improve but this will not be a long-term solution. I am particularly taken by the suggestion by one university press that scholars will accept electronic-only if they have no possibility of publishing in print because their subject area is so specialised/ commercially uninteresting. If there are lower costs they will be balanced by lower income, while the basic costs of the editorial process will remain the same. Publishing monographs simultaneously in both print and electronic versions is not (to my mind) going to work. Making available new channels will work for some types of books but for R2R monographs there is the basic problem that the number of potential readers is inherently small. Is it smaller than in the past and is that why print runs have been reduced as sales have declined? No   it is just that libraries no longer hold books to keep a collection complete or just in case someone might want to read them. Just-in-time library policies will remain the norm and indeed electronic access will probably enable their extension
- There is no electronic solution to the crisis, if monographs continue to be much as they are at the moment. There may be (is) short term additional revenue but I cannot see the business models of the publisher partners standing up in the medium term. There is just not enough money around to cover what are in fact significantly increased costs, which have to be carried by some part of the chain.

- I cannot see the Darnton model ever being commercially viable and I suspect that, after the first tranche of money for three years, funding will dry up. I think it is a red herring.
- However I can see such models of co-operation between different sectors as the History eBook project having some sort of validity. As I have mentioned in the study the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) through its SPARC project has tried to forge alliances with non-profit publishers (in this case learned society presses) and individual groups of academics to create competition in the world of (as they see it) overpriced STM journals. I think that there is scope for the development of a different sort of co-operative enterprise, organised along lines only just beginning to emerge. I also think it could be successful. It will only work if it aims to make money by which I mean that the model takes into account the understanding of the way publishing works which publishers tend to have and does not flirt with cost-recovery models. A surplus is always needed for investment.
- I like the model of aggregation online too. Again there is scope for more developments along these lines and co-operation between publishers on a larger scale than currently. Such models will work better if they are less parochial, i.e. more international, and they admit that commercial publishers have something to offer. Electronic networks lend themselves to distributed arrangement and developments of the subscription model, taking advantage of the way in which licenses have been stabilised in the serials environment, do look hopeful.
- I am not sure about the subscription model. Publishers from serial backgrounds looking at scholarly book publishing have always sort to find a way of selling by subscription. For example non-periodical serials are characteristically sold as books but are viewed by librarians as serials. I have personally experienced an attempt to change the channel to market for such publications in one university press from bookseller to subscription agent. It did not work. However the subscription model, in spite of all the problems they have had with serials, still appeals to librarians: it makes it possible to budget.

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for publishers

The following document was sent out to those publishers who agreed to receive a questionnaire. The circumstances relating to the selection of publishers and fall back positions when this long document proved too testing for recipients are explained above in section 2.1. I decided against quantifying the responses for reasons partly explained in the first section. It would be misleading. Many responses were not straight positives or negatives.

CONFIDENTIAL

**ELECTRONIC SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF MONOGRAPH PUBLISHING
Publisher Questionnaire**

I would appreciate your filling in the following information so I can keep track of the responses I hope to get:

Name:
Press or division for which you speak:
E-mail address:
Telephone number:

1. Explanation

Thank you for having agreed to fill in this questionnaire or consider filling it in. If you can return it by the end of the month this will be most helpful.

I would appreciate your being as frank as possible and if you do not (yet) have a strategy to say so. Bear in mind that, although this study will be published, the content of completed questionnaires will be kept in strict confidence and I shall not quote or identify you/your company without explicit written instructions. If you wish for more information about my own credentials as a consultant I am happy to provide them.

After some thought and consultation I have produced a somewhat wordy questionnaire (rather than boxes to tick) because there is so much interpretation in this somewhat uncharted area. If you think that I am trying to impose a view on you please answer back.

In most cases the e-mail which accompanies this document will have a tail including my introductory approach that comprises a description of my purpose. In case not, may I remind you that I am using the returns from this questionnaire to add to my own reading and the results of extensive interviews to produce a series of scenarios of publisher strategies. I shall try these out on both author/readers and other intermediaries in the information chain, particularly librarians.

The basic theme is the exploration of the thesis that it is becoming more difficult for publishers to bring out monographs and that the electronic opportunities could help them in this mission.

I appreciate that the way I have produced this questionnaire is based on the assumption that you, as a publisher, are still a print publisher and are considering becoming (in part) an e-publisher. Please forgive me if you have already implemented an electronic publishing strategy and have results that you can give me. I would appreciate feedback on any actual experience in the penultimate sections or where appropriate.

2. Monographs

As we all know this term is used in a variety of different ways. This questionnaire is concerned with research monographs , books which are records of primary research intended for other researchers and bought primarily by libraries. I am assuming for my

purposes that this type of book is mainly written by academic authors in the arts and humanities (and to a lesser extent in some of the social sciences). In these disciplines such work represents the main channel for communication of research and is recognised as such for purposes of tenure and promotion. As this definition is an important one, my first substantive question will be:

Q1 - Do you accept this definition of a monograph as applicable to some of your publications and, if not, can you provide one that better fits your understanding of what you are publishing?

3. Your list of publications

The next sections are concerned with your print experience for reasons that are obvious from my title. I need to compare the present print situation one with the potential electronic one.

I am keen on finding out the importance of monographs on your list and would appreciate your giving me the following statistical information. I am happy with estimates.

Q2   How many books of all types did you publish in 1999?
Q3   How many books do you expect to publish in 2000?
Q4   How many books do you hope to publish in 2001

Q5 - How many of the books published in 1999 were research monographs?
Q6   How many of the books expected for 2000 will be monographs?
Q7   How many monographs do you hope to publish in 2001.

I am also interested in the subject disciplines represented on your monograph list. Can you give me an approximate breakdown for each of the three years?

Q8   In what subjects did you publish monographs in 1999 and how many in each discipline?
Q9   In what subjects will you publish monographs in 2000 and how many approximately in each discipline?
Q10   In what subjects do you hope to publish monographs in 2001 and how many do you estimate producing in each discipline?

You may comment on the background to your answers here or in your answers to my questions in section 8.

4. Print runs

Many publishers have told me that their monograph print runs have gone down in recent years and may go down further. I shall ask a further question about printing-on-demand in a later section and appreciate that how you view this alternative will impact on your answers here?

Q11   Have your first print runs of monographs gone down over the last five years and, if so, can you give me a trend?
Q12   Do you anticipate a further decline and if so what sort of runs are we talking about?
Q13   Do the print runs and declines (assumed) differ from discipline to discipline and, if so, in what way?

I am interested in what markets/channels you are printing for and will return to this question below.

Q14   Do you ever expect to reprint a monograph and, if so, in what circumstances?

Obviously I am assuming that there has been a declining demand for the monographs you are publishing. If you disagree there is scope to do so in section 6.

5. Pricing and extent in print

In this section I want to explore two related questions which represent strategies for dealing with declining sales in the print environment. In all answers I am interested in any distinction between disciplines.

Q15   How do you price your monographs or, more specifically, what are the ranges of prices that you habitually adopt?
Q16   Has your selling price per page gone up over the last three years and do you project an increase next year?
Q17   Have your prices for monographs increased over the last three years and do you anticipate increasing the prices next year.

Q18   Has the average extent of your monographs gone down over the last three years?
Q19   If you are tending to publish shorter books, is this because you are accepting manuscripts that are shorter or demanding bigger cuts of the authors?

These are rather mechanistic questions and I would be grateful for any general comments you might care to make about an implied strategy, higher prices for shorter books to make up for lower sales, which is common in scientific publishing.

Q20   Have you adopted the strategy implied above to a greater or a lesser extent and has there been any author reaction?
Q21   What do you think of the proposal that monographs should be shorn of their bibliographies/footnotes in order to make their production cheaper?

I think it was the New York Times who produced this suggestion.

Q22   Have you adopted any/any other strategies to save on costs of monograph publishing?

I was thinking of cutting marketing spend and lowering production values but I would be interested in any steps you may have taken or considered.

6. Sales and profits

I appreciate that a decline in print runs is likely to indicate a decline in sales but this is not always the case. Some publishers cut print runs to cut inventory and some retain print runs that may not always be justified by actual copies leaving the warehouse.

Q23   Have you experienced a decline in the sales in monographs over the last three years and, if so, can you give me any statistical information with particular reference to difference between disciplines?
Q24   Do you expect the decline (if there is one) to continue/accelerate?
Q25   Do you know where most of your copies go to e.g. individual purchase through bookstores or by mail order, to domestic libraries, to overseas libraries and has there been any change in the pattern?

I do not wish to probe without reason into the question of the profitability of monographs in print but it is clearly germane to my study so I hope you do not mind if I ask you:

Q26   Do you make a profit or surplus on your monograph publishing as a whole?
Q27   Do you tend to make a profit or surplus on monographs in particular disciplines and, if so, which disciplines?
Q28   Do you tend to make a loss in certain disciplines and, if so, which ones?

It would help me if you define what profit (surplus) or loss means as a concept for your publishing house.

Q29   Are there any financial trends which you might feel able to share with me which relate to monograph publishing and its profitability?
Q30   Has the financial return from monograph publishing had any impact on your willingness to publish this type of book?

7. Submissions

I want to explore the concept of crisis in the next section and the author and reader reactions to electronic alternatives in a later section but I want to explore now the suggestion that has been put to me of an increase in the number of manuscripts submitted. Hence these questions.

Q31 - Are more manuscripts of monographs being submitted to you than was the case three years ago and, if so, in what subjects?

Q32 - In any case are the manuscripts submitted tending to be longer or shorter in extent and again are there observable distinctions between subjects?

Q33 - Are you getting fewer or more theses/dissertations presented for publication both as a percentage of total submissions or absolutely?

Q34 - Are you conscious of fewer or more works from senior/established authors being submitted?

Any other comments suggested by these questions will be gratefully received. I am asking questions about the attitude of authors to electronic/electronic-only publication in a later section.

8. Crisis

As a historian I am aware that the concept of a crisis in monograph publishing is one which has been a staple of publishing in our subject since the early seventies (to my knowledge) and maybe earlier. I would appreciate your views on the history (if there is one) or the crisis (if there is one) and its nature and causes. I am not at all sure how best to formulate questions and would appreciate any free-form comments to help me out. You are current practitioners and are best placed to interpret what is going on.

Q35 - Do you think there is a crisis in monograph publishing and, if so, in what disciplines?

If you do not think there is a crisis, please do not ignore the questions in this section but give your views on where the perception that there is a crisis comes from. Notice that in the heading to this questionnaire I have used the word problems . I would be very interested in any definitions you might like to share with me.

Q36   What is the history of the crisis   how has it come about?

Because the perceived crisis has such a long history I am particularly interested in what has brought about the present perception.

Q37   Whether there is a crisis or it is just more difficult to publish all the books you would like to publish, what impact has it had on your decision-making process and your overall business strategy?

I appreciate that this is a <u>very</u> open-ended question.

9. Electronic strategy

I now want to try to establish your general strategy relating to the electronic publishing of scholarly monographs. Please do answer these questions even if you are still not sure what to do. You will not be on your own. I would appreciate thoughts as well as decisions.

Q38   Do you intend to produce your monographs in an electronic format (as well as print), have you already done this or might you do it in the future?
Q39 - Is this/was this/might this be your complete monograph list or is it part and, if part, which disciplines?
Q40   Do you intend to/have you/might you produce your monographs in electronic format only?

I shall ask you questions about both the details of the strategy and also the economics of it in later sections and also ask you to advise on your experience if you have any track record so far. I would now appreciate some answers to some rather open-ended questions:

Q41   What are your general reasons for the decisions or plans assumed in the previous questions?

I am keen to get at your general thinking in this area and learn how your monograph publishing fits into the general scheme of things as it applies to your list. I also have some more explicit questions:

Q42   Do you think that electronic publishing will enable you to publish more monographs (should you want to)?
Q43   Do you think that electronic publishing will enable you to maintain your current level of monograph publishing which otherwise would be difficult or impossible?
Q44   Do you think that electronic publishing will enable you to publish worthy monographs that you previously considered too specialised?

The implicit question is why? Please do give the rationale for your strategy if appropriate? It will not have escaped your notice that some of the library-based projects suggest that electronic publishing will enable more books to be published than was the case in print.

Q45   Are you working/ will you/ might you work with front list only or is digitisation of back list monographs part of your what you are doing/ your plans.

I am very interest in the balance between simultaneous print/electronic publication or electronic publication only and digitisation of back list and any strategy which involves the sort of clustering of front list and back list monographs envisioned in the History e-Book project (see below in the section on Experience).

Finally a rather different type of question prompted by the fact that a publishing association sponsors this project and by my own views on the role of the publisher   an open-ended question.

Q46 - Given that the main role of the publisher is to add value to what the author provides, do you consider that producing a monograph in an electronic

form rather than as a print book impacts in any way on this justification for our existence?

I shall ask more about authors and readers below. I shall also ask about your perceptions as to the usefulness of the/an electronic format.

10. Partners

Please note that I am only concerned with monographs in this questionnaire and so, although it would be very interesting to me to learn in confidence whom you are working with, I am only justified in being interested in deals that involve your monograph list.

There are a range of companies out there who want to work with publishers who wish to put content into electronic format and sell it. You can either use such a company for preparing electronic files, for hosting the files and/or for selling the files (or part of them). You may be handling some of these roles yourself or indeed all of them and I shall ask about this sort of enterprise in the next section. In this section I shall ask about your general relationships with partners either current or prospective and tease out the details in the later sections. I am breaking out the roles that may well be represented by the same partner. If you want to ignore the questions and just tell me what sort of deal you have with those companies you are partnering with, that would be just as helpful as a yes or no approach   indeed more so.

Q47 - Are you working with/will you be working with/might you work with a company who prepares electronic files (for you) from your content?
Q48 - Do they/will they/might they make use of the files themselves   for details see Q53 below?
Q49 - Do they/will they/might they charge you for the files i.e. if you ask for them back?
Q50 - Could you specify the companies you are working/intend to work/might work with in this context, both those you already have a contract with, and those you are negotiating with and those you might consider working with?

Q51 - Are you working with/will be working with/might be working with a company who is hosting your electronic files for you as distinct from one which is making use of the files which you yourself are (also) hosting?
Q52 - Does/will/might the company charge you?

Q53 - Are you working/will you work with/might you work with a company which sells your files or receives payment for allowing access to your files?
Q54 - If so, what are they offering to what sort of customer and for what sort of financial arrangement with the customer?
Q55 - What is/will be/might be your deal with this company?

I am (as you see) struggling to make these questions generic. What I really mean is do you have a deal with people like NetLibrary or Versaware and, if so, what is the deal

what do they do for you and on what basis do you pay them and/or they pay you? I mention two companies not necessarily because their offerings are the most appropriate but because their names come up most frequently in conversations.

I am not asking you for details of the financial arrangements in this section but reserving it for a later section where I ask for information about business plans.

11. Going it alone

A number of publishers have told me that they are very keen on keeping control over their own content and the following questions relate to situations where you may be venturing into the unknown on your own. Some of these questions are alternatives to those asked in the previous section.

Q56   Do you/will you/might you prepare your own electronic files from your monograph content?
Q57   Do you/will you/might you host them on your own server?
Q58   Do you/will you/might you sell the content yourself i.e. to the customer and not through an intermediary, and, if so, what sort of deals do you offer?
Q59   Do you sell your content yourself as well as working with intermediaries?

I am not sure how to phrase these last two questions. What I really want to know is your strategy for going electronic and reaching your customers whether libraries or end-users. It seems to me that some publishers are concerned with keeping control of their files and using partners as delivery mechanisms only whereas other are not. I am happy that you should replace answers to these questions with an explanation of this strategy

12. Electronic files and databases

In this section I am interested in some technical information but I would like to begin with some questions about your perceptions as to the potential usefulness of an electronic format. I am not primarily concerned with the details of what you are doing technically but of how it fits in with your overall strategy.

Q60   Does an electronic monograph appeal as a concept because it gives easier access to the reader at the desktop?
Q61   Does an electronic monograph appeal as a concept because it potentially gives access to more readers at their respective desktops?
Q62   How do you relate to the idea that a monograph is particularly suited to the retrieval and searching possibilities inherent in an electronic environment because it is for browsing or searching rather than reading from end to end?
Q63   How do you value the potential of an electronic file to allow linking through to journal abstracts from references or to other published material?

Q64   How do you value the potential of an electronic file to allow linking through to data used in the research which lies behind the monograph.
By data in this question I mean digitised records and other material available in the public domain as part of library or other resources.

Q65   Have you ever considered allowing the author to place data on your server or put in links to material held on his own web-site, and would such a practice be valuable to the author or reader?
I am thinking here about privately held material which may now be in electronic form and which is too copious or not relevant enough to be part of the body of the text. Such material is growing to be a feature of importance in the publication of papers in some scientific disciplines. Questions are raised as to the exact relationship of this data to the validated article that has resonance in monograph publishing**.**

Q66   What are your views about the usefulness of using the functionality of the electronic format to make multimedia items e.g. video or audio clips available as part of the monograph?

Q67   Do you have any views about the advantages or disadvantages of reading on screen rather than reading the printed page?

I ask this question because of the suggestion, frequently expressed in certain circles, that a) technology e.g. MicroSoft ClearType will significantly change the readability of on-screen text and b) that the younger generation find reading on-screen as natural as or more natural than reading the printed page.

Q68   Are your electronic monographs intended for reading on a pc/laptop or on a dedicated hand held device?

What you intend may well be apparent from the partners you are working with but not necessarily. Hence this question and the following two:

Q69   If the latter what particular hand held devices?

In the second half of this section I shall wish to ask about the various file formats which are available.

Q70   Do you/will you/might you make use PDF as your electronic file format?

Q71   Do you/will you/might you make use of XML as your electronic file format?

In the online journals content most publishers are beginning to produce two different electronic files.

Q72   Do you intend to/might you follow the open eBook standard which is developing?

Q73   If you are working with a partner in the area of conversion what will you be handing over for conversion i.e. what files do you hold as a result of the process of producing a printed book   PostScript, Quark, or PDF.
Q74   Do you intend to encrypt your electronic monographs and, if so, what sort of technology do you have in mind?

I am aware that this last question opens up a big area and one where there is a lot of debate relating to the securing of authenticity, a subject which interests me quite separately from this particular study. I do not expect you to answer at length but I would appreciate a broad-brush view of your plans in this area if they exist.

In the third half of this section I wish to ask some questions about collections of monograph material in the form of databases. You will be aware that there have been many (failed) attempts within the larger corporates to set up databases of content that will enable slicing and dicing. Some of the projects mentioned in the section under Experience aim to cluster, as obviously do such companies as eBrary in rather a different way. My question is:

Q75   Do you intend to/ are you holding the electronic files of your monographs as a database which can be accessed in various different ways and, if so, please be concrete?

Finally I wish to raise the question of granularity in association with identification of the digital object. In this context granularity refers to the size of the nugget of scholarly information that you can sell on its own

Q76   Do you see any future for taking out elements of your monographs, e.g. a chapter, and either putting it on your site as a taster or selling it separately?

As you will know electronic gurus have long emphasised the idea that the book as such is a construct which has had its day and that smaller nuggets of information are viable and preferable in an electronic environment. I would appreciate your explaining any views you may have on this topic.

Q77   If you see some mileage in this area for your monograph publications, have you considered abstracts and/or key words at the beginning of chapters?

Q78   Have you/will you/might you join the DOI Foundation and identify your monographs/parts of your monographs with a digital object identifier?

13. Printing on demand

This questionnaire is not about printing on demand but as I did my initial research I realised how closely related strategies concerning electronic publishing were to the printing on demand possibilities now available through such companies as Lightning Source.

Q79   Do you see printing on demand as an alternative or in addition to providing electronic monographs?
Q80   Are you planning/can you envision not printing any copies of a monograph but making it available either on a print on demand basis or as an electronic file?
Q81   Are you planning/can you envision printing a small number of copies of a monograph and adopting print on demand for any orders over this initial print?
Q82   Are you planning/can you envision adopting this approach for your back list as well as your front list?

I am particularly interested to learn whether you are strategically linking the two possibilities of electronic monographs and on demand printing.

14. Authors and readers

I am very interested to discover whether an interest or a lack of interest in electronic monograph publishing has been stimulated by pressure from or at least interest among the scholarly communities with whom you work. I am separating out the author from the reader function because it is the experience of some of us that the scholar has a split personality when faced with many publishing problems e.g. as they impinge on library budgets.

Q83   Have any of your authors pressed you to put their monographs in an electronic format
Q84   Have any of your authors shown an interest in their monographs being put in an electronic format?
Q85   Have any of your authors argued that if their monograph was published electronic-only it would be cheaper and reach more readers

I would now be grateful for answers to the same type of questions relating to the response of your end-users .

Q86   Have you had any suggestions from the academic community that in its function as readers it would prefer to receive research material in the form of monographs in an electronic format?

I am assuming that it is likely that any expression of interest in electronic formats is likely to come from a learned society (with whom you are associated) rather than an individual.

Q87   Have you ever attempted to get (succeeded in getting) your authors to deliver structured electronic files or is it something you are considering?

If this question seems far-fetched look at the site of the History eBook project mentioned later in this section.

Q88   Do you see electronic publishing of monographs as a way of dealing directly with/selling directly to your scholarly readers rather than through the intermediation of booksellers and libraries?

If you have had any positive pressure from the academy it may be the result of well-publicised projects like those listed below under the section on experience .

Q89   Are you aware of any body of opinion in the scholarly community which sees electronic monographs as a way forward in making scholarship more accessible?

15. Intermediaries

In my picture publishers as well as librarians and book vendors are intermediaries in the business of bringing the research from the author to the reader but here I am primarily concerned with the latter two roles.

However I do have an obvious first question in this section:

Q90   Do you think the publication of monographs in electronic format will disintermediate the publisher as some librarians seem to think?

And the obvious follow up:

Q91   How do you envision the role of the book vendor and wholesaler in the electronic environment?

I am interest to learn if you think that they can/will adjust or whether they will be marginalised?

Q92   How to do you envision the role of the librarian in the electronic environment?

There are various new types of intermediary beginning to appear on the scene and it is perhaps too soon to attempt a taxonomy but I shall nevertheless ask:

Q93 If you have observed the new players such as NetLibrary how would you characterise their roles in the information chain?

16. Business plans

In this section I want to examine, with your help if you feel able to comment, on the financial aspects of your electronic strategies but first I have a question about your partners if you are working with them.

Many of you will/may be working with partners. It is often said that the business models of the partners currently courting publishers are difficult to discern/ seem to change a lot.

Q94   Have you a clear picture of the business model of the partners you are working with/may work with?

Please specify if it seems appropriate to do so. I would certainly be most interested in your take on some of the players out there.

Q95 - Do you feel threatened by these models and, if so, why?

My interviews with some publishers have suggested to me that there is a great deal of distrust of some of the proposals being made to publishers.

As far as your own planning is concerned, I would appreciate your thinking about a range of points often made by the protagonists of electronic publishing.

Q96   Will it cost you more or less to produce an electronic-only monograph over the cost of a print monograph?
Q97   How much more will it cost you to produce a combined electronic and print monograph, i.e. two formats available, over a print-only monograph?

I am assuming an extra cost because the cost of the files will be on top of the cost of printing and distribution but so much depends on the file formats you are using and who are doing the conversion/digitisation that I do not expect a very detailed reply. I would certainly relish a detailed reply if you have done your spreadsheets and are willing to give me your findings

Q98   Have you costed the (additional) costs of holding files on a server and making them accessible (management) and what were your conclusions.

My thinking here comes from electronic journals where the most significant cost involved is not the file production but the investment in complex management systems.

Q99   Is it your view that the advantages of no returns, and no stock holdings outweigh the disadvantages of constructing and managing a database and have you quantified your thinking?
Q100   Do you expect to sell electronic monographs/versions cheaper than their print equivalents as seems to be the current pattern for trade books?
Q101   Do you see the revenue from these sales as additional to the revenue from print monographs or cannibalising the revenue you would have got from print?
Q102   Have/will/might you make your monographs freely available on your site to improve the sales of your print monographs and can you comment on that decision?

It is difficult to ask relevant questions without putting forward too many scenarios of my own which may distort your replies so please be as open-ended as you have time to be.

Q103 If you do make monographs available electronically, what do you think will be the financial consequences for your house?

17. Experience

I am putting this section in for two reasons. First I would appreciate learning more from those participants who have put monographs into electronic format.

Q104 - Have your sales so far met budget/plan?
Q105 Have you any idea who the end purchasers are?
Q106 Do you intend to continue with your policies or modify them in some way?
Q107 Are your aims met?

Secondly I would be interested in your reactions to some of the high profile projects going on in the USA and mainly driven by players outside publishing. Do they tell us anything that we can draw upon in monograph publishing and, if so, what?

Q108 Are you aware of and, if so, have you any comments to make about the History eBook project (www.historyebook.org)**?**
Q109 Are you aware of and, if so, have you any comments to make about the Univ. of Pennsylvania Digital Library (digital.library.upenn.edu)?
Q110 - Are you aware of and, if so, have you any comments to make about the Columbia University Online Books project details/evaluations of which are available at a number of places on the Columbia site including www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/digital/texts/about.html**?**
Q111 If there are any other projects which are (more) relevant the needs and plans of publisher, can you tell me about them and their significance?

18. Future expectations

I would appreciate some blue skies (or even out of the box) thinking.

Q112 Do you think that by the end of this decade or sooner all scholarly communication will be electronic?
Q113 Do you think print monographs will continue and for how long?
Q114 Do you think the electronic environment will change the nature of scholarly publishing and, if so, how?
Q115 Specifically do you think the book as a construct for scholarly communication in the humanities has had its day and will be replaced by journal articles and/or large scale database projects?

Both solutions have been suggested by funding authorities in the UK

Q116   Do you think publishers will continue to have a role in monograph publishing and, if not, who will take over this role?

These questions are not intended to be definitive but rather to set out some possible pointers to future scenarios.

19. Comments on this project

I have already interviewed a number of publishers. I realise already that there is a wide diversity of views among scholarly publishers about the opportunities presented by electronic publishing and that these views are in many cases changing quite rapidly. A number of those I have spoken to have suggested to me that it would be much better if I could put off this exercise until next year or the year after when the situation is clearer. The terms of my funding prevent me from doing this but I do however have an opinion. It is a view that I accept but only partly because I think the possibilities will continue to change and we shall not reach a plateau of understanding   at least within the foreseeable future.   I am very conscious however that the way in which I have framed these questions for the purposes of this study may well to some reveal that I really do not understand what I am writing about. This is the open-ended section to ask you:

Q117 What questions do you think need to be asked?

If you get this far thanks

Appendix 2 : Questionnaire for librarians

Below is the short questionnaire that was sent out to librarians. An explanation of the reasons for the formulation and the selection of recipients is given in sections 2.1 and 7.2 above.

The questionnaire was sent by e-mail:

ELECTRONIC SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF MONOGRAPH PUBLISHING

I am preparing a study, which examines electronic solutions to the so-called monograph crisis. I am referring to research books mainly produced in the humanities and central to the ways in which scholars in disciplines like history disseminate their work. The British

National Bibliography Research Fund is funding this research and the British Academy encourages it

I would appreciate your answering a few questions relating to the acceptability of
 electronic monographs .

1. Would your library buy a monograph in a non-print format?

a) In preference to print if it was available electronically at the same price
b) In preference to print if it was available more cheaply in an electronic format.
c) As well as print if the additional cost was minimal.
d) Not at all

2. Would your library prefer an electronic format which

a) Enabled downloading on to a hand held device and, if so, what sort?
b) Was designed for accessing online?

3. Do you expect your users/patrons to access such monographs

a) Not at all
b) Reluctantly
c) With ease?
d) In preference to print?

4. Do you expect users to print out to read?

5. On the basis of what you know of your users/patrons do you expect them as authors to entrust their monographs to an electronic format:

a) if no print is possible?
b) By preference?
c) By preference if greater access and perhaps additional features are possible?

6. Can your library handle this type of publication?

7. Have you had any experience within your library of electronic monographs and if so can you tell me about it.

I would appreciate any comments you may feel able to make. I am on rather a tight schedule and would appreciate top of the head replies coming to me soon rather than more reflective remarks coming in March.

Appendix 3: COMMENTS ON SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

In this appendix I am proving bibliographical notes (A3.2) and some additional bibliography not referred to in the text (A3.3). I am however preceding these notes by some general comments on the sources on this topic (A3.1).

A3.1 Comments on sources

The nature of this topic is such that some of the items cited are not published in a strict sense and some are to be found on web-sites only if one knows where to look. This is transient material, which cannot be cited. A lot of the background to statements in this study comes from diligent reading of the list serves. Unfortunately the sites, dedicated to e-books, are primarily concerned with trade book and to a large extent self-publishing. The heavyweight commentators e.g. Seybold are naturally most interested in where the money lies, both trade and business-to-business. I shall list some of these sources below in A3.3.

There is surprisingly little of substance written on the topic of this study and actually very little more researched material on the development of e-books as a whole. The standard online bibliography is the frequently updated one by Charles Bailey   see A3.3.

The most useful investigation of the situation of the scholarly monograph is not covered by Bailey and is really rather difficult to track down. It is the eLib study by C. J. Armstrong and Ray Lonsdale, cited in note (1). This is a major piece of research and to my mind central to any further investigations of this topic or indeed the wider area indicated by its title. Drawing attention to this document through this study will perform a service whatever the merits of what I produce. Unlike most eLib projects there is a serious attempt to understand the problems and motivations of publishers and draw lessons from their experience. I have my criticisms, which I shall articulate in the relevant parts of this study. There is one central criticism that I shall mention here but which does not lesson the value of what was brought together for future workers. It is that, in spite of the long list of recommendations with which it concludes, Armstrong and Lonsdale are more descriptive than process-oriented and was not perceived (I believe) as leading anywhere.

I have also found the contributions to the (US) Chronicle of Higher Education, searched over the last decade, to be well-written and informed opinion pieces and rather more insightful on the whole that what is available in the periodicals serving the British higher education system.

Since I finished preparing the text of this study, Bookseller publications have brought out *Publishing 2001: Attitudes to technological change.* The full reference is given in note (13). My own essay (as is the case with the other essays in the volume) is based upon the results of a very professional questionnaire, which covered topics indicated by the subtitle. As publishers of most types were contacted, the actual sample of monograph publishers was small and the questions did not differentiate between research monographs and other publications of scholarly publishers. Nevertheless there is some useful confirmatory evidence in here, which I have cited in one or two places.

I have a qualifying remark to make. This study is concerned with ideas and perceptions, but it is primarily concerned with practical developments, actuals rather than rhetoric. Much of what appears in print as well as on the Web is rhetoric in the sense that is statements of intent without evidence of how the intent is to be realised. Armstrong & Lonsdale give references going back through the decade. Many of those cited assumed rapid and immediate change. I have taken up this point in section 4.1.

On a personal note I want to refer back almost two decades. I attended a conference at the University of Kent when there were a number of excellent lectures by a major figure from Stanford University. As far as I can discover they were never published. He explained in some detail and very convincingly that the transfer of scholarly communication to the screen was imminent   perhaps coming into being a year later. All the technology was developed or about to be developed. Some of what he projected has just now been realised. Microsoft ClearType at last gives us a typeface for the computer screen, but do we have as yet a thoroughly satisfactory (physical) reader?

A3.2   Bibliographical notes

(1)   Armstrong, C J and Ray Lonsdale, *The Publishing of Electronic Scholarly Monographs and Textbooks* (1998), available at www.ukoln.ac.uk/dlis/models/studies/elec-pub/elec-pub.htm.

(2)   See http://www.jisc.ac.uk/dner/ebooks/. The survey is being conducted by Louise Edwards, E-mail Address: l.edwards@cranfield.ac.uk

(3)   http://aaupnet.org/news/mellon.html currently gives minimal information

(4)   http://www.superjournal.ac.uk/sj/ is the site. Most of the information currently available for public consumption is held there, even though the site was last updated at the end of 1999. A full treatment of all the findings is still expected but no publication date is available. Also see The Chronicle of Higher Education 1 October 1999 A24

(5)   http://chronicle.com/weekly/v45/i20/20a02003.htm is the URL but this is only available to subscribers to the journal. The full reference is Young, Jeffrey R, *Award will Put Winning History Monographs on the Web*, The Chronicle of Higher Education 22 January 1999 page A20.

(6)   http://www.unifi.it/e-press/inglese/index_eng.htm and http://www.roquade.nl/ are examples of sites, which show digital university presses arising from or based on library initiatives. The aim is to bring author and reader together. The Roquade project, which brings together several Dutch universities, is currently concerned with science only.

(7)   See www.arl.org/sparc/ passim but in particular the Declaring Independence project.

(8)   The author of this comment is a senior US librarian, who is active on the Liblicense site   http://www.library.yale.edu/~llicense/ListArchives/, which is an invaluable for its discussion of most aspects of scholarly journals. I cannot detect a contribution from him on the site containing these sentiments and have to assume that it is a personal communication. It is as relevant to book publishing as it is to serials publishing.

(9) See http://www.chronicle.com/weekly/v45/i41/41b00401.htm. Schiffrin, Andre, *Payback Time: University Presses as Profit Centers,* The Chronicle of Higher Education, 18th June 1999, page B4.

(10) See previous reference

(11) See a survey by the Book Industry Study Group at www.bisg.org/pub.html.

(12) *Trends in Journals Subscriptions 1998* (1999) The Publishers Association, London.

(13) Watkinson, Anthony, *Developments in Global Academic Publishing* in *Publishing 2001:Attitudes to Technological Change* (2001), BPI Communications Inc pages 30-36.

(14) See http://www.arl.org/sparc/core/index.asp?page=j3. The reference is to Bainton, Toby, *Writers' and Readers' Rights in the Electronic Environment,* given at the SPARC 1999 Membership Meeting. The quotation reads:

 There are hopeful signs that authors, driven by ambition to be read, will self-publish in semi-organized or highly-organized non-commercial databases, thus weakening of monopoly grip of major publishers.

(15) I was thinking particularly of the site I found most useful (www.ebooknet.com), but visitors to the site now (June 2001) will find that it has been suspended by the new sponsors Gemstar

(16) http://www.arl.org/scomm/epub/papers/chodorow.html. This is Chodorow, Stanley, *The Once and Future Monograph* published online in the collection *The Specialized Scholarly Monograph in Crisis or How Can I Get Tenure if You Won't Publish My Book* by Association of Research Libraries (1999), Washington DC.

(17) See reference (1). There is no pagination. The section is 1.4.

(18) See http://www.questia.com/Index.jsp

(19) http://www.chronicle.com/weekly/v45/i22/22a05601.htm. Collier, Bonnie, *Preserving the Central Role of the Monograph,* The Chronicle of Higher Education, 5 February 1999, page A56.

(20) http://chronicle.com/che-data/articles.dir/art-44.dir/issue-03.dir/03b00401.htm. Wissoker, Ken, *The Scholarly Monograph is Flourishing not Dying,* The Chronicle of Higher Education, 12 September 1997, page B4

(21) http://chronicle.com/che-data/articles.dir/art-44.dir/issue-09.dir/09b01001.htm. Thatcher, Sanford G, letter under the heading *The Future of Scholarly Publishing,* The Chronicle of Higher Education, 24 October 1997, page B10.

(22) The Times Higher Education Supplement (THES), 23 April 1999. For an American viewpoint see Waters, Lindsay, *Rescue Tenure from the Tyranny of the Monograph,* The Chronicle of Higher Education, 20 April 2001 - www.chronicle.com/free/v47/i32/32b00701.htm.

(23) http://www.arl.org/scomm/tempe.html. I detect spin in the way in which these principles have been reported. I printed out a report from the Chronicle of Higher Education dated June 7 2000 and authored by Denise K. Magner. The headline then was *"Academics and Industry Issue Pact to Guide the Evolution of Scholarly Publishing."* A search of the database of the journal now (June 2001) comes up with the same article, slightly re-organised, but with a completely new heading, *Seeking a Radical Change in the Role of Publishing: Universities seek to fix a*

'broken system and to change the way professors are evaluated. The article concerned is available at http://chronicle.com/weekly/v46/i41/41a01601.htm.

(24) Baldock, Robert, *Rumours of a Death that Might be True,* THES, 10 December 1999.

(25) Meadows, A J, *Communicating Research* (1998), Academic Press, San Diego has (page 19) a quote relating to publications in general from Michael Faraday in 1926 but Dr. Michael Mabe of Elsevier Science, Oxford, has many additional quotations on this topic.

(26) For general information about the publication of the Society see http://www.ihrinfo.ac.uk/rhs/rhspub.html.

(27) See note (3) and below (28).

(28) http://chronicle.com/weekly/v46/i06/06a02401.htm for the news item headed *University-Press Group to Study Whether Books in Some Fields are Disappearing,* The Chronicle of Higher Education, 1 October 1999, page A24.

(29) For the general reference to the conference proceedings see (16) above. The contribution by Torrey is at http://www.arl.org/scomm/epub/papers/torrey.html.

(30) There have been lots of surveys showing how the growing serials budget has squeezed the book (monograph) budget. A recent survey commissioned by the (UK) Publishers Association Council of Academic and Professional Publishers is Sowden Peter, *University Library Spending on Books Journals and Electronic Resources: 2001 Update.*

(31) http://www.theaha.org/perspectives/issues/1995/9510/9510DIR.CFM. These observations came from the Director s Desk column in Perspectives Online (the house magazine of the American Historical Association) published in October 1995.

(32) See http://www.tandf.co.uk/news.html.

(33) See reference (13) above.

(34) http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/digital/texts/about.html is the home page for the project. The two reports are made available in several formats and there is a list of earlier and related reports also available. The easy access to information provided in this way is typical of the thoroughness with which this research was done, and, even now and in spite of my criticisms in this section, there is more information to be mined on this site than there is in any other consideration of scholarly publishing in electronic form.

(35) Darnton, Robert, *A Historian of Books Lost and Found in Cyberspace,* The Chronicle of Higher Education, 12 March 1999, most easily accessed at www. Theaha.org/prizes/gutenberg/rdarnton.cfm.

(36) See reference (44) below.

(37) For the journal Internet Archaeology see http://intarch.ac.uk/ and for the electronic journal projects in general see http://www.jisc.ac.uk/elib/projects.html#ej.

(38) www.jstor.org.

(39) www.mellon.org/awmar.html

(40) http://www.leeds.ac.uk/cedars/.

(41) See http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa/about.html and http://www.umdl.umich.edu/moa.

(42) For questions of authenticity see http://www.clir.org/activities/details/authenticity.html.

(43) There is a lot of material on this project including some independent comments on www.theaha.org/.

(44) See the article on the first prize-winning event for the Gutenberg-e Prizes held in January 2000. The article comes in the May 2000 issue of Perspectives Online and is entitled *Gutenberg-e Workshop Sets the Scene,* and can be found at www.theaha.org/perspectives/issues/2000/0005/0005new3.cfm.

(45) www.ciaonet.org/.

(46) www.historyebook.org. Whereas it is difficult to find much information about the Gutenberg-e prizes, this project already provides a massive database considering how much has so far been accomplished.

(47) http://www.chronicle.com/che-data/articles.dir/art-44.dir/issue-03.dir/03a01801.htm.

(48) www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/icsu/proceedings.htm.

(49) http://associnst.ox.ac.uk/~icsuinfo/working1.htm

(50) See (24) above.

(51) For an analysis from the inside of the success of National Academy Press in extending readership see Pope, Barbara Kline, *National Academy Press: A Case Study,* The Journal of Electronic Publishing (June 1999) Volume 4 Issue 4. The web address (free access) is www.press.umich.edu/jep/04-04/pope.html.

(52) www.NetLibrary.com

(53) The Microsoft site presents special problems of navigation and it is brought home to one forcibly how small a concern e-books are to the behemoth. The home page of Microsoft Reader is http://www.microsoft.com/reader/default.asp, but the following press release (1999) gives a better idea of what taking up the technology means for a business publisher http://www.microsoft.com/PressPass/press/1999/Dec99/SolePlanetaPR.asp. Judging by the silence from Microsoft activities during the last year and the lack of information on the site, one must assume a certain lack of rapid progress.

(54) www.questia.com

(55) www.ebrary.com

(56) see (32) above

(57) www.versaware.com was the site at the time of writing the main body of this text but at the time of the final revision I cannot get access. The following reference from May 2001 describes financial problems: http://www.seyboldreport.com/News/2001/20010516.html. Almost all the companies cited in this section seem to be troubled by the loss of confidence by investors in dot.com ventures.

(58) http://www.tandf.co.uk/news.html. The particular news release quoted is from July 2000.

(59) http://www.lightningsource.com/index2.html avoids the introductory graphics and gives a way into rather a lot of useful information about the offering.

(60) www.doi.com.

(61) Pfund Niko and Michael Groseth, *The Advent of Print on Demand,* The Chronicle of Higher Education, 30th March 2001, page B7.

(62) www.alpsp.org.uk. The publication is titled *What Authors Want.*

(63) See the description of one journal and its success in getting authors to help bring the overall production costs down at www.aas.org/~pboyce.

(64) Published in the Perspectives of the American Historical Association for February 2000. www.theaha.org/perspectives/issues/2000/0002/0002vie1.cfm.

(65) Chronicle.com/free/2001/01/2001012301t.htm. The article is Carlson, Scott, *Logging in with Paul Brians: A Professor Prefers Online Self-Publishing to Scholarly Journals and Books,* The Chronicle of Higher Education, 23rd.January 2001.

(66) Gibbs, Nancy J, *Ebooks: Report on an Ongoing Experiment,* Against the Grain, Volume 11 Issue 6 (December 1999- January 2000) pages 23-25 is an example of one experiment. It is noticeable that this is an experiment and that it was some time ago. It took at least two years for the main body of big publishers to catch up with some pioneers in the mid-1990s.

(67) Lynch, Clifford, *The Battle to Define the Future of the Book in the Digital World,* First Monday volume 6 number 6 (June 2001) and http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue6_6/lynch/index.html.

(68) http://www.stanford.edu/dept/news/report/news/april12/supress-412.html is the announcement of the appointment of the prominent librarian Michael Keller to oversee the Press but it is interesting that a year later there is no statement of new directions posted on the web-site of the Press.

(69) See (6) for reference.

(70) www.Ovid.com.

(71) Mr. David Worlock of Electronic Publishing Services Ltd. See his site at www.epsltd.com

(72) See the surveys, which form the bulk of the new book cited above in reference (13)

A3.3 Additional Bibliography

The following sites are also relevant to the aims of this study:

1. http://eboni.cdlr.strath.ac.uk is a British project evaluating e-book hand held devices.

2. http://www.ebookmap.net/ is a constantly updated map of the e-book scene especially directed at librarians.

3. http://info.lib.uh.edu/sepb/sepb.html is the location of the regularly updated SCHOLARLY ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING BIBLIOGRAPHY compiled by Charles W. Bailey Jnr. At June 2001 version 37 is up. This bibliography, though very valuable in some ways, was not very relevant to the subject of this study.

4. LIS-E-BOOKS JISCmail list is concerned with E-books in academic libraries and should be useful but it is too soon to tell.