

To Whom It May Concern,

As a humanities researcher, I am vitally interested in policies resulting from your discussions about public access to peer-reviewed scholarly publications. The policies you adopt will very likely have repercussions for all scholarly research, especially that which is supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and most especially that which is supported by the NEH's Office of Digital Humanities. Other federal agencies, too, support humanities research: the Department of Education, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian, the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences, and the National Archives should all be included as you formulate answers to the questions you pose in your request for information.

You ask, "How can policies for archiving publications and making them publically accessible be used to grow the economy and improve the productivity of the scientific enterprise?" Substituting "scholarly enterprise" for "scientific enterprise," I can certainly speak to the latter point: policies that ensure that federally funded publications are open will improve scholarly productivity in all fields. The fact is that scholars often communicate among themselves using the same communication tools that the public uses: e-mail lists, Google Groups, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and so on. In order for research to be shared in these media, it must be shareable, and to be shareable, it must be open. If scholar A's institution subscribes to a particular journal and scholar B's does not, a link sent to scholar B by scholar A will not work. Even within a university, scholars will find that a link they send their students or graduate students often does not work if those students are off-campus. The "paywall" puts significant obstacles in the way of spreading information, which is the heart of scholarly productivity. Scholars who do not learn about relevant information may spend many months or even years in futile pursuits.

Those of us who work in the digital humanities are particularly aware that public access to our research makes our work more widely known by other scholars as well as by the public. The digital humanities researcher Melissa Terras has also written about the importance of public access in raising a publication's profile among other scholars and the public: in her piece "What Happens When You Tweet an Open Access Paper," she traces the increasing popularity of a peer-reviewed paper that she posted in an open repository: "Prior to me blogging and tweeting about the paper, it got downloaded twice (not by me). The day I tweeted and blogged it, it immediately got 140 downloads." The downloads only increased, and, ultimately, she wrote, "This post was mentioned in the Times Higher [Ed] last week, and the paper has now been downloaded 805 times in total." Note that open access to her paper, and her ability to link directly to the paper from social media such as her Twitter account and her blog, ultimately led to reporting on her work in a major newspaper.

In 2011 at the Modern Language Association annual meeting, I gave a paper with the tongue-in-cheek (but true) title "Your Twitter Followers and Facebook Friends Won't Read

Your Peer-reviewed Article if They Have to Pay for It, and Neither Will Strangers," in which I related the experience of discovering that several members of my social network, both scholars and non-scholars, were interested in reading my arcane work on Victorian poetic form if they could gain access to it freely. That (very short) paper is freely available at <http://amandafrench.net/blog/2011/01/07/twitter-facebook-article/> should you care to read it. In that paper, I cited a study by Jason Priem and Kaitlin Light Costello presented at the 2010 meeting of the American Society of Information Science and Technology titled "How and Why Scholars Cite on Twitter." As I wrote,

It was one of my most clicked-on links for the year, with 118 views—many of the links I tweet to news articles and so on get only thirty or so clicks. The authors studied a sample of 46,515 tweets from twenty-eight scholars — seven scientists, fourteen social scientists, and seven humanists — and reported that "In our sample of tweets containing hyperlinks, 6% were citations. Of these, 52% were first-order links and 48% were second-order." By this, they meant that 52% of the links went directly to peer-reviewed work, while 48% were links that went to non-peer-reviewed work about peer-reviewed work: blog posts and news articles, for instance.

One of the main reasons that scholars tweeted these "second-order" links was that they worked for everyone: "[S]cholars may prefer to link directly to the article when it is open access but will resort to second-order links to bypass paywall restrictions. Participants were attracted to open-access articles for Twitter citations; Ben said 'I would certainly be much more likely to link to things if they were more readily available.' "

That study, as well, is openly available at http://mail.asis.org/asist2010/proceedings/proceedings/ASIST_AM10/submissions/201_Final_Submission.pdf. As I hope is clear, I frequently make use of (and share) conference papers for my research, and therefore, I give a decided "yes" to your question, "Should other types of peer-reviewed publications resulting from federally funded research, such as book chapters and conference proceedings, be covered by these public access policies?" The format in which scholarly research is published should make no difference to its public availability.

It is true that the scholarly work I have mentioned so far has not been explicitly funded by the U.S. government. However, I reiterate that humanities researchers do indeed receive federal funding, and I am no exception. In 2009, a grant from the National Historic Publications and Records Commission, the funding arm of the National Archives, allowed me to work for a year on a project to update the curriculum of the Archives and Public History graduate program at NYU with department chair and principal investigator Dr. Peter Wosh. We were more than happy to distribute the results of this project publicly, online as well as through scholarly channels such as the annual meeting of the Society for American Archivists and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference. This work would certainly come under the aegis of the Issa Research Works Act, an act which troubles me deeply. For another example, I have applied for a Kluge Fellowship at the Library of Congress for the year 2012, and although the funds for this fellowship come from a private foundation, it is possible to likely that any work I produced while doing research at the Library of Congress would also qualify as federally funded research.

Finally, I work at the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (CHNM), a humanities research center which has benefited greatly from federal funds, and which as a body is committed to public access to scholarly publications. The Center itself, which has conducted more than \$20 million in grant-funded research, relies on a nearly \$3 million endowment achieved with the assistance of two Challenge Grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. CHNM's work, like that of any scientific research center, relies on both federal and private funding: CHNM's work has been recognized with major grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Department of Education, the Library of Congress, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Historic Records and Publication Commission, and the Sloan, Mellon, Hewlett, Rockefeller, Gould, Delmas, and Kellogg foundations. Since 1994, CHNM has been a leader in improving students' understanding of history and the humanities through digital media, in building digital archives and mounting online exhibitions, and in developing software tools for scholarship. In 2010, CHNM's websites had almost 500 million hits and nearly 20 million unique users, and its software tools are used by more than a million scholars and students every day.

I hope to have convinced you that humanities researchers and the federal agencies that support them are interested parties in the development of policies related to public access to peer-reviewed scholarly publications. Please consider, too, the tremendous extent to which research done at institutions of higher education is made possible by the tax policies of the federal government: such research belongs to the public. Thank you for your work.

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