

Brill book series on Scholarly Communication

Series editors: Adriaan van der Weel (a.h.van.der.weel@hum.leidenuniv.nl), Ernst Thoutenhoofd (e.d.thoutenhoofd@rug.nl), Ray Siemens (siemens@uvic.ca)

Scholarly Communication is an academic series that publishes imaginative and thought-provoking accounts of scholarly reading, writing, and research practices from any disciplinary perspective, with special emphasis on past and present (digital) change in academic writing technologies and literacy.

Aims and scope

This series offers a new venue for original studies into the mutual shaping of past, current and future writing technologies and scholarly communication. The series aims to bring together insights into the literate nature of scholarship and scholarly activity, interrogating the interaction of writing technologies and scholarship. The focus in this series is less on disciplinary specificities than it is on topical and imaginative contributions to scholarly literacy in the widest sense. Books in the series will explore the full impact of changes in text technology (in any historical era) on scholarly knowledge production and vice versa, paying attention to such aspects as citation and referencing, drafting and editing, reading and writing, storage and retrieval, review and criticism, paper and e-paper, presence and authorship, from any perspective, including historical, philosophical, technological, cognitive, and pedagogical ones.

Audience

All those with an interest in reading and writing as scholarly work, and in academic text and publications as products and resources of scholarship. It also targets researchers studying the past, present and future of scholarship, scientific research, scholarly communication and scientific bibliometrics. It covers a wide range of disciplines, including communication studies; book history; media studies; humanities computing; interface studies; science and technology studies; social sciences; information and library sciences; literature studies and literary criticism; linguistics; and philology.

Rationale

Scholarship has in the course of time become one of the most influential social institutions we have created. Central in the history of scholarship is the history of inscribing knowledge in order that it may be shared. That makes the process of knowledge production a social process, which involves drafting, editing, reviewing, evaluating, assessing, scoring, annotating, restoring, curating, and other literate activities. Along with institutions such as academic publishers, research libraries, and text infrastructures, these activities indicate a pervasive academic commitment to writing and its technologies, and reflect the importance of knowledge production in the history of human culture.

Providing the basic technology for knowledge inscription, writing stands foremost among

the shared technologies of scholarship, and remains today at the core of scholarly pursuits. In fact, the process of writing—the process of inscribing knowledge—is also one of our chief means of knowledge discovery. It is a technical and creative competence that is shared across time and scholarly disciplines. Successive writing technologies and their changing material substrates, ranging from inscription in clay, via writing and printing on paper to digital recording in ones and zeroes, have each in turn decisively affected knowledge production. Favouring different research methods, each successive technology has had its distinct impact on the form and content of knowledge inscription.

Today scientists, scholars, and academic publishers are once again in the process of reinventing the technologies of academic writing, thus setting the course of scholarship in future knowledge infrastructures. It is already clear that academic writing as we know it is becoming recast into a plethora of digital communication techniques, making writing but one among many techniques for crafting ideas. Digital techniques of reading, writing and publishing will have a pervasive impact on the production and circulation of scholarly knowledge and ideas, and, conversely, new forms of of scholarly knowledge production will affect reading, writing and publishing technologies.

This series is particularly timely because the use of digital media in scholarship has not yet become fully natural and transparent in the way the use of printed text has, over the centuries, become. Scholars everywhere are experimenting with the wide-ranging new possibilities and are still trying to assess how digital media not only affect the way they report their research findings, but also the nature of doing research and interacting with others about research, and even the very questions that may be asked. The histories of books, writing and communication and the sociology and philosophy of knowledge would all lead us to predict that digital media will alter formal organised inquiry, but at this point there is limited awareness and understanding of the transformative nature of the process. This is a new field, still largely in need of definition. The digital media are only going to make further inroads into existing scholarly work practices. Moreover, since the digital media themselves will continue to evolve, scholars are unlikely to ‘settle down’ into new customary practices the way they did with the stable medium of print. This means that the field will demand continuing reflection for the foreseeable future.

Sample subjects

- Enhanced publications;
- The definition of the nature and content of knowledge in terms of the media used to inscribe and disseminate it;
- The future of peer review: changing forms of registration, validation and certification;
- Bibliometrics in a digital world;
- The digital drive towards collaboration;
- Digital research methods transforming research questions.