

# On Journals and Communities: A Note from *JEP*'s Co-editors

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This new issue of the *Journal of Electronic Publishing (JEP)* on “Multilingual Publishing and Scholarship” is also the first issue published by us—Dr. Janneke Adema (Centre for Postdigital Cultures, Coventry University) and Dr. Alyssa Arbuckle (Canadian Research Knowledge Network & Érudit)—as incoming editors. When approached by the previous editors to lead *JEP* as its new co-editors, we were excited by all of the possibilities such an opportunity holds. We both had long admired *JEP* for its timeliness, rigor, trendsetting, and experimentation, and of course its longevity. As a pioneering open access journal in the field, first established nearly 30 years ago, we hold a lot of respect for the contributions *JEP* has made to the fields of publishing and scholarly communication, and of course for the ways that our editorial predecessors shaped this publication over time: Colin Day, Judith Axler Turner, Maria Bonn, Simon Rowberry, Michael Roy, and David Lewis. Early *JEP* editor Judith Axler Turner described the role as a “heady experience” in volume 3, issue 1 (3 [1]), published in September 1997, and we have to agree. It is indeed an all-encompassing privilege to engage intellectually with the authors, peer reviewers, special issue editors, editorial board, readers, and University of Michigan Publishing staff who all contribute to the discursive project that is *JEP*.

*JEP* articles have shaped our own intellectual engagement throughout our careers as scholars of scholarly communication. Alyssa’s work in open social scholarship was undoubtedly influenced by *JEP*-published articles such as Kathleen Fitzpatrick’s 2007 article on CommentPress (10 [3]) and Bob Stein’s 2012 article “Back to the Future” (18 [2]), which considered the sociality demonstrated in marginalia of early texts. Alyssa’s understanding of the publishing landscape was informed in no small part by touchstone *JEP* articles such as Cheryl Ball and Douglas Eyman’s “Editorial Workflows for Multimedia-Rich Scholarship” (2015, 8 [4]); Heidi McGregor and Kevin Guthrie’s “Delivering Impact of Scholarly Information: Is Access Enough?” (2015, 18 [3]); and Nancy Maron’s article with co-authors, “The Costs of Publishing Monographs: Toward a Transparent Methodology” (2016, 19 [1]). Janneke previously co-edited (with Gary Hall) a special issue of *JEP* (19 [2]) on “Disrupting the Humanities: Towards Posthumanities,” which included annotated video-papers of the Disrupting the Humanities seminar series.

At the time, *JEP* was one of the few journals providing space to publish this kind of experimental work, as it had done previously with the Books in Browsers proceedings (17 [1], 18 [1]). Similar to Alyssa's, Janneke's research has been inspired by *JEP* articles that have looked to the future of scholarly communications—such as Tara McPherson's article on “Scaling *Vectors*” (13 [2])—and those that have explored experimental literature, such as Amaranth Borsuk's “The Upright Script” (14 [2]) on data poetics and visualizations as a form of poetry and Helen J. Burgess's article from 21 (1), which delves into the editorial praxis of publishing e-lit. Importantly, *JEP* has often served as a venue for critique of the political economy of publishing. A few notable recent examples from *JEP*'s rich history on this topic include Reggie Raju and Auliya Badrudeen's “Social Justice Driving Open Access Publishing: An African Perspective” and Jeff Pooley's “Surveillance Publishing,” both from 25 (1), as well as Eileen A. Fradenburg Joy and Vincent W. Van Gerven Oei's “What is Your Threshold? The Economics of Open Access Scholarly Book Publishing, the ‘Business’ of Care, and the Case of punctum books” (26 [1]).

We consider *JEP* a vehicle for exploring timely, relevant, interesting, and rigorous ideas about scholarly communication and publishing in the 21st century. Taking a broad scope, in our editorship of the journal we want to highlight matters of interest across the *JEP* community and from various regions, career levels, and disciplines. *JEP* is open in the many nuances of that word: open to read and submit to, certainly, as a (diamond) open access publication, but also open to proposals about the form and format of scholarly communication, to interventions from newcomers to the field of scholarly publishing, and to writing that pushes against the status quo.

Journal editing is central to the discipline of the humanities, and it is one of the activities that set the humanities apart. Pre-print servers make very good sense for many scientific fields, and we certainly support them for what they are. A journal has a different function than a pre-print server, though, and purposefully so. We perceive a journal as a curated collection of authors and their ideas brought together into conversation, issue by issue: a discursive community. Over time, then, a journal becomes a disciplinary archive of said discursive community; as the nearly 30-year history of *JEP* demonstrates, a journal tracks how conversations shift and move over time, or periodically return to some of the key questions that occupy and define a discipline. As then *JEP* editor Maria Bonn presciently wrote in 2010 in her editorial farewell to Judith Axler Turner, “we are still thinking about peer review, determinants of quality, sustainable economic models, and new roles for publishing professionals, and I suspect we will be for quite some time to come.” Where interest on specific topics and debates grow, peak, wane, and evolve, the role of the humanities journal editor is to pay close attention to emerging topics of conversation, to identify pertinent questions that merit discussion, to invite others to the discursive table, and to collaborate with multiple actors in the production of research. This disciplinary tradition

carries us into our roles as the new co-editors of *JEP*. As *JEP* co-editors, we are asking ourselves and the entire *JEP* community: What do we want the future of scholarly publishing to be? How do we take an active role in shaping that future, instead of reacting to corporate-led decisions and initiatives that dominate the current scholarly communication landscape? How do we, as publishing scholars, students, instructors, publishers, editors, librarians, technologists, and activists, work together to build and share our ideas for a more inclusive, creative, resilient, and equitable academic publishing world? In short: What matters to us?

Building off these community questions, we are keen to explore how the journal (and *JEP* in particular) acts out a set of relationalities between people, communities, institutions, (non-human) agencies, power structures, technologies, and infrastructures. We are interested in the journal as an active, performative intervention into the spaces and functions of scholarly communication—that is, how *JEP*, as a nodal point in this meshwork of relations, offers us an opportunity to try out and explore new forms of knowledge production that are speculative and, where needed, work against the status quo.

*JEP* has been, is currently, and will remain a community exercise. The journal will only persist for as long as authors and readers care to engage over the topics central to its mission. Together, we can work to ensure that *JEP* becomes a platform for us all to rigorously interrogate the intellectual, political, and ethical implications of new forms of publishing, as well as to closely monitor developments in the publishing industry. In doing so, we will continuously reflect on the role of publishing and publishing institutions in the wider scholarly communication landscape and collectively experiment with the various “horizons of the publishable” (Malik 2004).

We hope you enjoy reading this first special issue of our tenure, which we edited with the brilliant Élika Ortega of the University of Colorado. Thank you for being a part of the *JEP* community.

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